This project was supported by funding from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) and the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Building Communities Program. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Birmingham MPO or the RPCGB. For more information on this program, please visit http://www.rpcgb.org or call (205) 251-8139.

This plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), MPO and RPCGB as a requirement of Title 23 USC 134 and subsequent modification under Public Law 114-94 (FAST Act) December 2015. The contents of the plan do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the USDOT.

The contents of this Comprehensive Plan are designed to serve as a guide in the public and private development of land and as such are not binding upon the City of Chelsea when making specific land use decisions and public investments.
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*Endorsed by the Chelsea City Council on August 4, 2020*
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“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

- Jane Jacobs
Introduction to the Chelsea Comprehensive Plan

Chelsea is brimming with optimism. Once a sleepy crossroads in rural Shelby County, Chelsea is now on the front lines of suburban expansion down the U.S. 280 corridor. The City now faces important choices that will permanently shape its future.

How will it handle rapid growth? Where will it go? Can it continue to afford the types of services that residents have come to expect? How can it address the effects of past choices, such as sprawling, disjointed development? How can citizens build a community that offers opportunity and delight to residents, businesses, and visitors?

These are difficult questions that elicit a wide range of answers, not all of which will be mutually compatible. All citizens, however, can agree that they want to leave their city better than they found it. This document presents planChelsea, the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Chelsea. This is their roadmap for answering those questions.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Chelsea…

• Expresses a community vision for growth and development over the next 15 years and identifies actions that can achieve that vision.

• Is a policy document used by City leaders, developers, business owners, and citizens to make decisions about future growth, development, policy, and capital improvements.

• Was developed based on 12 months of public input, data analysis, and meetings with citizens, officials, and other stakeholders who served on committees, took surveys, offered ideas, and participated in coloring the future of their beloved City.

The policies contained within the Plan will be used to inform and guide land use decisions, helping to assure citizens that these decisions are credible and not arbitrary. The Plan is not a law or a zoning ordinance, but a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect new development as well as redevelopment.
Plan Organization

The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan contains seven Chapters and three Appendices. Chapters 3-7 are organized by the following planning elements: Future Land Use, Economic Development, Recreation and Green Systems, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Public Services. Each chapter is organized into goals and recommended actions that relate to the chapter’s theme.

Table 1.1: Plan Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>This chapter includes the purpose of the plan, the legal foundation for planning in Alabama, a summary of how the plan is organized, and a high level summary of the public involvement process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chelsea Today</td>
<td>This chapter briefly highlights existing conditions and trends in Chelsea (as provided in more depth in Appendices A and B). Topics presented include, demographics, median income, housing trends, and development constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Future Land Use</td>
<td>This chapter presents the Future Land Use Map, which will guide the City's future zoning and land use decisions. Descriptions of the future land use categories and the future land use goals are also provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Economic Development</td>
<td>This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to growing the local economy, including local business development, workforce development, and fostering productive relationships between the City and business community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Recreation and Green Systems</td>
<td>This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to stormwater management, low impact development and parks and recreation facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Transportation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining to the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system, expanding the multi-modal transportation network (e.g., trails, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities) and transportation infrastructure maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Public Services</td>
<td>This chapter provides goals and actions pertaining code enforcement, public safety, community facilities and events, and the ability of municipal codes to encourage better placemaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Implementation</td>
<td>This chapter includes the detailed implementation matrix for the Plan’s recommended goals and actions and describes lead partners that should help with implementing each of the actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Public Involvement Summary</td>
<td>A detailed documentation of the public involvement process for this Plan. Each of the outreach strategies are detailed (project website, surveys, eblasts, public meetings, etc.), along with participation rates, survey results and information gathered through the outreach activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Existing Conditions</td>
<td>This document is an in-depth assessment of where Chelsea is today and covers a range of topics: a sociodemographic summary, existing land use, zoning and development trends, transportation and mobility characteristics, utilities, and community facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Housing Market Analysis</td>
<td>This document provides an overview of the historic and current residential housing trends in Chelsea, both for owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan expresses the citizens’ vision of how they want their city to grow in the future, and provides a framework and a methodology for converting that vision into a sustainable reality.

– Purpose of the Plan, pg. 8
Background

Chelsea is a relatively young city, having incorporated in 1996. Since that time, it has become the fastest growing city in one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Alabama. Chelsea’s popularity is largely due to its small-town feel, strong school system, and high quality-of-life while still being conveniently located to Birmingham and Hoover along U.S. 280. With rapid growth comes new challenges and opportunities not anticipated as recently as 10 years ago. As such, planning for the future is critical for Chelsea’s continued success. Knowing this, Chelsea’s leadership determined that it was time to update their 2008 Comprehensive Plan and approached the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) to begin the process of creating a new comprehensive plan.

This City of Chelsea Comprehensive Plan, which has been branded as Plan Chelsea, is the cooperative effort between the RPCGB and the City of Chelsea. This Plan is an opportunity for the citizens of the City of Chelsea to tell their story and help shape the future vision for the City. It will help the Mayor, Chelsea City Council, Chelsea Planning Commission, citizens, developers and other community investors as they attempt to understand the vision for the City, especially for making decisions regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements. More information on the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan can be found in the next section.

Funding for the Comprehensive Plan was provided via the RPCGB’s planning assistance program, Building Communities. Under the Building Communities Program, the RPCGB provides funding at 80% of the plan’s total cost; the City of Chelsea provided funding in the amount of 20% of the plan’s total cost.

Purpose of the Plan

The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan expresses the citizens’ vision of how they want their city to grow in the future, and provides a framework and a methodology for converting that vision into a sustainable reality. It is a long-term plan (typically covering 5 to 15 years) that may extend beyond the lifetime of those participating in drafting the plan. It is used as a guide for public investment decisions, to determine what types of transportation system investments are needed, to determine what changes are needed to recruit more businesses and jobs, to determine what housing needs exist, to protect environmentally sensitive areas and to determine what is needed for the safety and welfare of the citizens. The Plan is also a guide for zoning decisions, which in turn guides development permits in the City.

Figure 1.1: Timeline of Plan Development

Kickoff
- Data collection
- Existing Conditions
- Housing Market Analysis

Outreach
- Surveys
- In-person meetings
- Stakeholder meetings

Draft
- Organize input
- Drafting Plan

Reveal
- Reveal Plan
- Collect comments and suggestions
- Revise Plan

Deliver
- Submit to Planning Commission and City Council for adoption

| Summer 2019 | Fall 2019 | Winter 2019 | Spring 2020 | Summer 2020 |
Figure 1.2: Chelsea Study Area Map
Planning Authority in Alabama
Planning in the State of Alabama is not compulsory, and there is no specific requirement on the frequency of comprehensive plan updates. However, it is strongly recommended that the City of Chelsea's Planning Commission, and the City Council, regularly review and update (as frequently as every five years) the Comprehensive Plan. This is especially true if a major change such as an annexation of land or a large land development decision occurs, or the completion of another study that impacts the Plan. Frequent review and updates also will help safeguard the City from legal challenges and enable them to be proactive in steering the City towards achieving its vision and goals, instead of being reactive to issues and challenges that arise because of the lack of adequate planning.

The Alabama Legislature provides guidance for municipalities that choose to exercise their ability to plan for their city’s growth and development. The Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 11-52-8 and Section 11-52-9 directs planning commissions “to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the commission’s judgment, bear relation to the planning of such municipality.” Section 11-52-8 goes further to state “Such plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts and descriptive matter shall show the commission’s recommendations for the development of said territory.” The procedure for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is established in Section 11-52-10 of the Code of Alabama.

Relationship to Zoning and Other Documents
The Comprehensive Plan guides land use decisions and becomes the foundation of zoning and subdivision decisions that are made by the Planning Commission and City Council.

The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan should not be confused with the City of Chelsea Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is a legal mechanism enacted by the City, whereby land is classified according to specific uses. Whereas the Comprehensive Plan is a guide for future growth and development, zoning is the tool utilized by the City to influence and direct development so that it reflects the intensity and desired form envisioned by the community, as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. In short, the Comprehensive Plan neither changes the Zoning Ordinance, nor the zoning on any specific property. Instead, it guides the decisions of the Planning Commission and the City Council as they apply the Zoning Ordinance and make decisions about changes to zoning on individual properties. Changing the Comprehensive Plan for a parcel of land requires a Comprehensive Plan amendment and changing the zoning for that parcel requires a rezoning application.

Table 1.2: Comp Plan vs Zoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Plan (Guide)</th>
<th>Zoning Ordinance (Law)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the future</td>
<td>About today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides general policies, a guide</td>
<td>Provides specific regulations, the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes what should happen in the long – term not necessarily the recommended use for today</td>
<td>Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups</td>
<td>Deals only with development-related issues under control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible to respond to changing conditions</td>
<td>Predictable, fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Land Use Categories (e.g., residential, commercial)</td>
<td>Zoning Districts (e.g., R-1 Single-family Residential, B-1 Neighborhood Business District)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Land Use Locations</td>
<td>Parcel specific zoning designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base document, declaration of goals</td>
<td>Implementation of goals/plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of the Public Involvement Process

Chelsea is home to many individuals, perspectives, and landscapes, all of which contribute to the mosaic of the community. The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan is based on an extensive community input process, which asked citizens to envision an economically, socially, civically, and environmentally healthy city of the future. This section summarizes the public engagement process and the results of those efforts.

Robust public involvement is the most critical part of any planning process. Without input from the public and knowledge of their desires, concerns, and vision, planners are limited in their ability to create an implementable plan that is tailored to the community. A plan should be a collaboration between locals and the planning team, and as such the purpose is two-fold: for the planners to educate stakeholders on how the planning process works and its purpose, and for the stakeholders to educate planners about their community. This collaborative effort creates a plan that is defensible, attainable, and reflective of the community it serves.

The RPCGB planning team for this Chelsea Comprehensive Plan used a multifaceted approach utilizing both in-person and online methods to gather as much information from the community as possible. The sections below highlight the outreach methods used by the planning team to inform their development of the Comprehensive Plan. A full public involvement summary is included in Appendix A “Public Involvement Summary.”

Project Website

A formal website for the Chelsea Comprehensive Plan was maintained by the RPCGB through the life of the project. This website, www.PlanChelsea.com, served as an information gateway for the Plan, and provided easy access to plan documents, public meeting details, survey results, project facts and other information.

Email E-Blasts

Email was the main form of communication used to provide information for the Chelsea Comprehensive Plan events, calls to action, and distribution of documents at plan milestones. Recipients included an initial list of businesses, organizations and residents that was developed by Chelsea City Hall and the RPCGB. Other recipients included those who opted in on the project website and those who attended the Kickoff Public Meeting and other plan-related events. It was the intention of this Plan that the email subscriber list would grow as the Plan progressed.
Visioning Survey

This 23-question multiple-choice and open-ended survey was open for responses from August 20th to October 16th, 2019. A total of 422 responses were received. The purpose of the survey was to assess the community’s perceived strengths, challenges, opportunities, development patterns, and resident satisfaction of various community services, including maintenance of local roads, code enforcement, police protection, the City’s responsiveness to formal complaints, public facilities, fire and rescue services and parks and recreational facilities. The survey was advertised on the project website and promoted via E-blasts, while hard copies were made available at Chelsea City Hall, the library, and Community Center, as well as at the Kickoff Public Meeting on August 20th, 2019. A summary of the responses to each survey question is shown in Appendix A “Public Involvement Summary.”

Online Mapping Tool

An online mapping tool, called a Wikimap, was available on the project website and allowed participants to “map” their issues, needs, and ideas on an interactive street map of the City. Participants were able to note locations of community assets, areas that need improvement, opportunity ideas, traffic issue areas, streets needing sidewalks or bike facilities, along with any other issue or idea they wanted to geographically pinpoint. The Wikimap was open for answers from August 20th to October 16th, 2019 and received 135 comments from 57 unique visitors. Direct links to both the Visioning Survey and Wikimap were made available on the project website and were also distributed multiple times via e-blast. To view the online Wikimapping results, please consult Appendix A “Public Involvement Summary.”

Steering Committee

A steering committee was established for the Chelsea Comprehensive Plan process. The steering committee consisted of the Chelsea Planning Commission members. This committee played a critical role in ensuring that this new Comprehensive Plan is grounded in the values and the aspirations of the people of Chelsea. The steering committee met X times during the planning process. Their meeting schedule is identified below:

Steering Committee Meeting 1: September 23rd, 2019

Steering Committee Meeting 2: TBD
**Face-to-Face Meetings**

The following face-to-face meetings were held with the general public:

**August 20th, 2019 Kick-off Public Meeting / Open House**

The Kick-off Open House was held on August 20th, 2019 from 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Chelsea City Hall. In total 30 people attended.

At the Kickoff Open House, Chelsea citizens expressed their concerns and ideas across a wide range of issues, including future projects and priorities, economic development, transportation, quality of life, and public services. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback to the planning team through the following interactive activities:

- Word Cloud activity
- Issues and Opportunities banners
- Visioning Survey
- Interactive mapping exercise

For detailed results of the Kickoff Open House activities, please see Appendix A “Public Involvement Summary.”
September 11th, 2019 Chelsea Business Alliance Luncheon

The RPCGB met with local business leaders at the monthly Chelsea Business Alliance luncheon at the Chelsea Community Center on September 11th, 2019 from 11:30PM – 1:00PM. The RPCGB promoted the Plan with a presentation and used an interactive keypad polling exercise to solicit input from the attendees regarding the current local business climate and ways that the City can improve it. A total of 27 people attended the luncheon.

November 5th, 2019 Group Stakeholder Interviews

On November 5th, 2019, the RPCGB met with two groups of local stakeholders. The first group consisted of City employees while the second group consisted of private real estate developers currently or recently active in the Chelsea area. The City employees were asked a series of open-ended questions about the challenges and opportunities facing their respective departments, what the City can do to address them, and how the Plan can assist their departmental goals. The developers were asked about the challenges and opportunities facing private real estate development in the area, what obstacles exist to developing more sustainable, walkable neighborhoods, and what the City can do to facilitate such development. A total of 19 people attended the two meetings: nine for the City staff and ten for the developers.

Table 1.3: Public Involvement Participation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face-to-Face Meetings</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kick-off Public Meeting / Open House</td>
<td>8/20/2019</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea Business Alliance Luncheon</td>
<td>9/11/2019</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Stakeholder Meetings</td>
<td>11/5/2019</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Plan Reveal Public Meeting / Open House</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Respondents</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visioning Survey</td>
<td>8/20/2019 – 10/16/2019</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Wikimap</td>
<td>8/20/2019 – 10/16/2019</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steering Committee</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting 1</td>
<td>9/23/2019</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web Content</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan Chelsea Website Unique Visitors*</td>
<td>As of 3/23/2020</td>
<td>1,473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Use this Document

Goals
The Plan's goals were created from data and comments received during public involvement process. For each chapter in the Plan there are numerous goals that correspond with the overarching chapter theme.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 1
BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES.

Actions
Supporting the goals, are actions - specific measures that need to be undertaken by the City and its partners to implement the goals. Some actions might already be ongoing, while others are new recommended ideas for the City to undertake.

Action TI 1.2
Construct context-sensitive bicycle infrastructure along strategic roadways.

Residents consistently called for the development of meaningful bicycle and pedestrian connections in order to counter Chelsea's automobile dependency. Fortunately, the City does not have to reinvent the wheel to create transportation choices for its residents. Two recently completed regional-scale bicycle plans exist that identify strategic roadway corridors for bicycle connections to and within Chelsea – the B-Active Plan and the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The 2019 B-Active Plan is the Active Transportation Plan for the Greater Birmingham region that was developed by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The purpose of the plan is to establish a clear vision for building and expanding a multimodal transportation network in Jefferson and Shelby counties, and in parts of Blount and St. Clair Counties, with a specific focus on creating a safer, more connected, and equitable active transportation system for the region. The 2018 Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides the County and its local partners with guidance on the construction of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities at a county-wide level. Both plans were prepared by teams of engineers and planners with extensive technical expertise in multimodal planning and were developed with extensive public involvement.

Since many of the desired routes for bicycling that were identified by the public coincide with those identified in the B-Active Plan and the Shelby County plan, all recommended roadway segments for bicycle infrastructure have been compiled into Table X.1. The City should use this table to help determine implementation priority for new bicycle infrastructure and facilities, beginning with those segments identified by both plans and by public involvement during the development of this Comprehensive Plan. As funding and rights-of-way become available, the City should work with the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization and Shelby County to construct context-sensitive bicycle infrastructure on these roadway segments.
“We’re all where we come from. We all have our roots.”

- John Guare
Demographic Profile

Chelsea is growing very quickly.

In the 22 years since its incorporation, Chelsea has grown from 906 residents to over 13,000 – an increase of 1,336%. It is still growing fast. Its growth rate of 27.8% between 2010 and 2017 far outstripped that of the Birmingham metropolitan area, which grew at only 1.8% over the same period.

Figure 2.1
Chelsea Population Growth, 1996-2017

Source: U.S. Census

Residents in Chelsea earn significantly more than their neighbors.

Household incomes in Chelsea are higher than that of the greater Birmingham region – significantly higher. In 2017, a typical household in the greater Birmingham region earned $52,088 per year. The typical Chelsea household earned $96,591, nearly 85% more.

Figure 2.3
Household Income Distribution

Source: U.S. Census

Chelsea has a strong middle class.

Much of Chelsea’s relative affluence can be attributed to its robust middle class. Overall, Chelsea has a fairly well-distributed range of household incomes, with over half of all households earning between $50,000 and $125,000 per year. The city has a significantly smaller share of low-income households than the region.

Median Household Income (2017)

$96,591
Chelsea

$52,088
Birmingham MSA

Source: U.S. Census
Housing Profile

Figure 2.4
Homeownership (2017)

6.8% Renter-occupied
93.2% Owner-occupied

Chelsea is a community of homeowners.
In 2017, there were 4,244 housing units in the city. Of those, 93.2% were owner-occupied, or 3,917 total units. The remaining 327 units were occupied by renters. Vacancy rates are also very low, amounting to only 7.3% of all units in 2017.

Figure 2.5
Vacancy Rates (2017)

92.7% Occupied
7.3% Vacant

Median Home Value (2017)

$221,900 Chelsea
$152,200 Birmingham MSA

Homes in Chelsea are valuable, yet affordable.
Chelsea has an exceptionally large share of affordable, mid-market homes (between $100,000 and $400,000), fueling the city’s popularity among families with children. While the city’s share of high-end homes mirrors that of the region, it has a drastically smaller share of low-end homes under $100,000 in value.

Affordability has not detracted from value, however; the median home value in Chelsea is almost 50% higher than that of the region.

Figure 2.6
Home Value Distribution (2017)

Source: U.S. Census
Chelsea has a highly skilled workforce.

As of 2017 U.S. Census estimates, 6,012 employees lived in Chelsea. This figure is briskly rising with the city’s population.

Roughly half of these employees worked in the top four sectors: education, health care, and social services (20.5%); manufacturing (9.7%); retail trade (9.7%); and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (9.7%). The concentration of these industries among Chelsea workers reflects their high levels of educational attainment, as many of these careers require college education. The unemployment rate among residents age 16 and older is 3.7%, reflecting a strong nationwide economy with historically low unemployment rates.
Chelsea is a bedroom community.

Lying at the edge of the Birmingham region, Chelsea sends a significant share of its workers to neighboring places. Out of the 6,012 employees living in Chelsea, 5,188 (86.3%) commuted to another location for work each day in 2017. The remaining 824 employees worked in Chelsea. In addition, 2,529 workers living in other places commuted into Chelsea each day, slightly offsetting the drop in day-time population.

The overwhelming majority of Chelsea residents commute to work by driving alone, and their average travel time to work is 16% longer than the regional average.

Figure 2.8
Resident Commuter Characteristics (2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drive alone</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transit</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 2.9
Commuting Patterns (2017)

5,188 commute out of Chelsea for work each day
2,529 commute into Chelsea
824 both live and work in Chelsea

Average Travel Time to Work (2017)

- Chelsea: 30.3 minutes
- Birmingham MSA: 26.2 minutes

Source: U.S. Census
Existing Land Use

Land use in Chelsea is shifting as the city grows.
Like any suburb on the edge of a metropolitan area, Chelsea is in the midst of a transformation. The once-rural crossroads town has become a thriving city, attracting thousands of new residents with cheap land, affordable homes, quality schools, and family-friendly atmosphere. The influx of newcomers has left its mark on the city’s land use, as subdivisions and retail steadily replace timberland and pastureland.

A significant portion of this evolution can be attributed to the growth of planned neighborhoods, the master-planned communities such as Chelsea Park or Chesser Plantation whose high number of homes on smaller plots of land lend a more suburban character to the city. Over half of the 6,491 parcels in Chelsea are part of a planned neighborhood, but constitute less than a fifth of the total land area. The largest land use classification by area is conventional residential, which are homes not in a planned neighborhood.

As with any growing community, Chelsea’s growth can be seen as a double-edged sword. While a larger population makes possible new shopping, dining, entertainment and recreation options, it also endangers the open space and rural character that drew so many residents in the first place. With nearly a third of the city’s land area yet to be developed (and possibly more through annexation), Chelsea is uniquely positioned to reap the rewards of proactive land use planning. Unlike nearby suburbs which are almost fully built-out without room to expand, Chelsea utilize this comprehensive plan to create a coherent strategy for smart, sustainable, and well-planned future growth.

**Figure 2.12:**
Existing Land Use at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share of Total Acreage</th>
<th>Share of Total Parcels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: **13,515 acres**  Total: **6,491 parcels**

13,515

Acres in the City of Chelsea

6,491

Parcels in the City of Chelsea
Figure 2.10: Existing Land Use Map
Development Constraints

Chelsea has room to grow, but not all available land is buildable.

As of 2016, a total of 5,802 parcels within Chelsea’s current limits, comprising 71.3% of the land area, had been developed in some way – that is, some structure had been built upon it. The 28.7% remaining undeveloped area is mostly timberland and pasture, which could conceivably be purchased by a developer and subdivided for development, be it residential, commercial, industrial or otherwise. However, not all this undeveloped land is easily buildable. Over 23% of this land lies either in a floodplain or on slopes greater than 10% (that is, where the ground rises 10 feet for every 100 feet of horizontal distance). These features are inconducive to development, as they require extensive earthwork to sufficiently flatten grades or raise them above the floodplain.

Topographical difficulties need not mean the land is without value, however. Floodplains and steep slopes are being utilized in cities throughout the country as recreational open space and parks. While not inherently revenue-generating, parks and public amenities that utilize topographically constrained land can catalyze nearby development by providing recreational opportunities while preserving memories of Chelsea’s rural heritage for all residents.
Figure 2.11: Constraints on Undeveloped Properties

Undeveloped property (2016)
Floodplain or steep slope
chapter three
Future Land Use

“The 20th Century was about getting around. The 21st Century will be about staying in a place worth staying in.”

- James Howard Kunstler
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Goal 3: Encourage a wide range of housing choices. ......................................................... 57

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The built environment shapes Chelsea’s form and function; future land use shapes the built environment. The Future Land Use Map and goals outlined in this chapter are the foundation upon which all other chapters are built. They will guide growth, development, and redevelopment over the next 5-15 years into a more efficient, sustainable form. They provide a framework for making infrastructure-related decisions, including transportation, utilities, community facilities, parks and green space, and environmental protection.

The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. Instead, it is a long-range tool intended to guide future zoning decisions and capital investment decisions. Whereas zoning establishes detailed requirements for setbacks, height, use, parking and other characteristics, the land use categories on the Future Land Use Map recommend a range of potentially appropriate land uses and intensities. The map’s color-coded categories express public policy on future land uses across the City. The land use designations have been drawn based on parcel lines, existing and desired development patterns, streets, environmental features and other logical boundaries.

In some cases, the recommended future land use is the same as the existing land use. However, in certain locations throughout the City, the Future Land Use Map contains areas where existing uses are proposed for a change in land use, or for redevelopment. In either case, it is not the intent of this Plan to place existing uses in a situation where their value or the quality of life of citizens is adversely affected. Rather, the intent is to demonstrate to potential purchasers or developers the community’s long-range view of how particular properties should be reconfigured and used should it become feasible to do so.

The Chelsea Future Land Use Map can be seen in Figure 3.1. The following pages define each future land use category shown on the map, along with each category’s unique characteristics and ideal design principles that would help that category realize Chelsea’s vision for a healthy, vibrant community.
Figure 3.1: Proposed Future Land Use Map
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 1

PRESERVATION AND RECREATION

The Preservation and Recreation designation applies to existing parks and sports fields, as well as areas designated for future parks and conservation areas. These areas, whether publicly or privately owned, are considered important natural resources and recreational amenities. They exist not only to provide sports and recreational outlets to residents, but also to preserve precious green space as Chelsea continues to develop. Land within this category should therefore be protected and maintained as parks or natural open space. Structures that support recreational uses (e.g., gazebos, pavilions, restrooms, snack bars, etc.) are appropriate in these areas, provided the primary land use remains green space and recreation.

CHARACTERISTICS

Land uses
- Parks, sports fields, multi-use trails, natural open space, museums, restrooms, and accessory structures that support or activate recreational space

Appropriate Zoning Districts
- O-I Office and Institutional
- A-R Agricultural Residential
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intensity / Density
Very low

Green Space
Formal and informal landscaping, walking trails, open space

Transportation
Low to moderate vehicular connectivity
Low to moderate pedestrian connectivity

Infrastructure
Public water and sewer and/or septic tanks
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 2

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The Rural Residential category applies to those areas that the community wishes to remain rural in character, including forest and pasture land, large-lot estates, and very low-density subdivisions. Large setbacks, spacious lots, and extensive open space characterize these areas. Very low street connectivity effectively precludes pedestrian activity. The objective of these areas is to preserve Chelsea’s rural character, rather than to provide a variety of amenities or services.

CHARACTERISTICS

Land uses
- Single family detached homes

Appropriate Zoning Districts
- A-R Agricultural Residential
- R-R Rural Residential
- E-1 Single-Family Estate
- PRD Planned Residential
- PMD Planned Mixed Use

Rural Residential

[Map of Rural Residential areas]
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**Intensity / Density**
- Residential: 1 unit per acre or less
- All others: Very low

**Green Space**
- Formal landscaping, open space

**Transportation**
- Low vehicular connectivity
- Low pedestrian connectivity

**Infrastructure**
- Septic tanks

*Image credit: AZ Location Service*
*Image credit: Investopedia*
*Image credit: Homes and Rentals*
*Image credit: CEB Blog*
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 3

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

The Suburban Residential category applies to conventional suburban subdivisions with approximately ¼-acre to 1-acre lots and curvilinear streets. Uniform detached homes, moderate setbacks and lot sizes, wide streets, cul-de-sacs, and limited connectivity characterize these areas. Neighborhood-scale commercial, institutional, and park spaces are acceptable. While existing subdivisions may not provide adequate connectivity, future development in these areas should provide for connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Rural land and open space should also be preserved through the use of conservation subdivisions within these areas.

CHARACTERISTICS

- **Land uses**
  - Single family detached homes, garden homes, neighborhood commercial, institutional, parks

- **Appropriate Zoning Districts**
  - E-1 Single-Family Estate
  - R-1 Single-Family
  - R-2 Single-Family
  - B-1 Neighborhood Business
  - PRD Planned Residential
  - PMD Planned Mixed Use
  - O-I Office and Institutional
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**Intensity / Density**
- Residential: Up to 4 units per acre
- All others: Low to moderate

**Green Space**
- Formal landscaping, open space, neighborhood parks, appropriate buffers between adjacent residential uses

**Transportation**
- Low to moderate vehicular connectivity
- Low to moderate pedestrian connectivity

**Infrastructure**
- Public water and sewer and/or septic tanks

Image credit: Wall Street Journal
Image credit: Valdosta Daily Times
Image credit: Fallbrook USA
Image credit: Fallbrook USA
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 4

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The Traditional Neighborhood category applies to areas around the future Chelsea town center and the emerging commercial node at the junction of County Highways 11 and 36. These areas are intended to form the long-term core of Chelsea by developing into vibrant, walkable neighborhoods with a diverse mix of neighborhood-scale uses and housing types. A wide range of housing scales are appropriate here, as are small commercial and institutional uses that serve the needs of their immediate neighborhoods, such as local restaurants, pharmacies, boutiques, churches, and schools. These areas should support pedestrian circulation with a highly interconnected street grid, small block sizes, and buildings placed close to the street.

CHARACTERISTICS

Land uses

Single family detached homes, townhomes, garden homes, duplexes, quadplexes, condominiums, loft units, neighborhood commercial, office, institutional, parks

Appropriate Zoning Districts

- R-1 Single-Family
- R-2 Single-Family
- B-1 Neighborhood Business
- PRD Planned Residential
- PMD Planned Mixed Use
- O-I Office and Institutional
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intensity / Density
Residential: Up to 8-10 units per acre
All others: Moderate

Green Space
Formal landscaping, open space, neighborhood parks, appropriate buffers between adjacent residential uses

Transportation
Moderate to high vehicular connectivity
High pedestrian connectivity

Infrastructure
Public water and sewer
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 5

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

The General Commercial category applies to areas of significant commercial concentration, such as those along U.S. 280. Regional-scale, general retail and services, including the food, hospitality, medical, and automotive service industries, are appropriate for this category, as are institutional and office spaces. These uses generate high volumes of vehicle trips, so highway access should be carefully managed so as not to impede traffic operations or preclude pedestrian circulation.

CHARACTERISTICS

Land uses
Retail, restaurants, services, office, institutional, community facilities

Appropriate Zoning Districts
- B-1 Neighborhood Business
- B-2 General Business
- O-1 Office and Institutional
- PMD Planned Mixed Use
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intensity / Density
Moderate to High

Green Space
Formal landscaping, appropriate buffers adjacent to residential uses

Transportation
High vehicular connectivity
Low to moderate pedestrian connectivity

Infrastructure
Public water and sewer

Image credit: LoopNet
Image credit: Fresh Capital Group
Image credit: Business Insider
Image credit: Kiplinger
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 6

EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The Employment Center category applies to existing light industrial uses, as well as areas designated for future office and industrial space. These areas provide space for major centers of employment that serve Shelby County and the greater Birmingham region, such as office parks, research parks, warehousing, distribution, and advanced manufacturing facilities. Institutional office space and supportive commercial uses that are inappropriate for neighborhood contexts are also appropriate for this category. Truck traffic, freight deliveries, and other intensive activities associated with these uses require this land use category to have excellent access to U.S. 280.

CHARACTERISTICS

Land uses
Light industrial, advanced manufacturing, research, office, automotive services, institutional, warehousing, distribution

Appropriate Zoning Districts
M-1 Light Industrial
B-1 Neighborhood Business
B-2 General Business
O-I Office and Institutional
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**Intensity / Density**
- High

**Transportation**
- High vehicular connectivity
- Freight and cargo access
- Low pedestrian connectivity

**Green Space**
- Formal landscaping, open space, appropriate buffers adjacent to residential uses

**Infrastructure**
- Public water and sewer

*Image credit: LoopNet
Image credit: Concrete Construction Company Alabama
Image credit: Jeffrey Sauers
Image credit: Ernst and Young*
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY 7

INSTITUTIONAL

The Institutional category applies to existing and future government, civic, educational, religious, and utility uses, as well as large-scale medical centers and cemeteries. These areas exist to provide necessary community services to residents and business alike.

CHARACTERISTICS

Land uses
Schools, civic uses, government offices, places of worship, hospitals, nonprofit facilities, cemeteries, utilities, parks and green space

Appropriate Zoning Districts
O-I Office and Institutional
### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity / Density</strong></td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Space</strong></td>
<td>Formal landscaping, open space, neighborhood parks, appropriate buffers adjacent to residential uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td>High vehicular connectivity, Moderate pedestrian connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Public water and sewer and/or septic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image credit: Pitts Media
Relationship Between Zoning and Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Plan expresses the community’s vision for how they want to see Chelsea develop over time. It is a guidance document, not a set of regulations. It does not replace the City’s zoning and development regulations. The Future Land Use Map and the descriptions of each Future Land Use category are intended guide decisions on zoning amendments and discretionary permits by the Planning Commission and City Council. The Commission and Council should refer to the Future Land Use Plan whenever they evaluate a proposed rezoning or land use question. If the proposal is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, then they should approve it; if it is not, then they should evaluate other alternatives. The Future Land Use Plan is not a static document, however; it can and should be periodically updated to reflect changes in real conditions and community preferences.

Table 3.1 below can be used to evaluate the consistency of zoning proposals with the Future Land Use Plan. If a particular zoning district is suggested within a Future Land Use category, then it will be shaded in green. If it is not an appropriate zoning district for that category, then it is left blank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Land Use Category</th>
<th>Suggested Zoning District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation and Recreation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Residential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Residential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATING ZONING PROPOSALS FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Zoning and the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is the community’s visual guide to future planning. It expresses the community’s long-term vision for how and where the City will grow over the next 20 years to accommodate expected population and job growth. It is intended to be used as a guide for zoning decisions by the Planning Commission and City Council. While they are not bound to adhere to the Future Land Use Map, the Commission and Council should evaluate future zoning proposals for consistency with the Map as strictly as possible, because the Future Land Use Map represents the community’s vision for development.

The Map is drawn from the policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan in conjunction with analysis of existing land use conditions. It shows the future land use and level of development intensity appropriate for each area of the City. While it will influence future zoning decisions, existing land uses will not be affected, nor will the right of property owners to use their land for the purpose as currently zoned.

The designation of an area to a specific category on the Future Land Use Map does not mean that a particular zoning classification is recommended. Rather, a range of zoning districts are appropriate for each Future Land Use category, as seen in Table 3.1. The Planning Commission should evaluate whether a zoning proposal for a particular property would match those appropriate for its Future Land Use category.

Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan

The categories employed in the Future Land Use Map should not be interpreted to support or preclude developments without consideration of the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Site considerations relating to topography, soils, conservation resources, or hydrology are also important in establishing the specific use and intensity of a particular parcel. Similarly, the presence or absence of adequate streets, schools, parks, and other community facilities should be considered before a development is approved that would otherwise be in conformance with the Future Land Use Map. Determination of the consistency of a proposed use or zone with the Comprehensive Plan should include consideration of the following questions:

1. Is the proposal consistent with the themes and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan?
2. Is the form and function of the proposed development appropriate for its category designated on the Future Land Use Map?
3. Will community facilities, parks, pedestrian connections, and other infrastructure be available at the appropriate levels to serve the development as proposed?
FUTURE LAND USE GOALS

Chelsea lies at a crossroads. As a desirable suburb on the edge of the metropolitan area, it faces high growth pressures and is surrounded by space with which to grow. But how will it grow?

Throughout the public involvement process of this Plan, citizens expressed a desire for a more compact and walkable development pattern with residential, retail, and jobs located more closely together. The goals and actions of this chapter are based on that desire. While conventional, more familiar development can still be accommodated, the following strategies provide a roadmap to creating more enduring, distinctive places that serve a variety of different lifestyles and needs. These goals and actions detail the policies necessary to realize the Future Land Use Map.

54% of residents prefer development that is concentrated in compact locations where it is easy to walk, compared to 28% who preferred spread out development where it was easy to drive.

- planChelsea Visioning Survey
FUTURE LAND USE GOAL 1
PLAN FOR A VIBRANT TOWN CENTER IN THE HEART OF CHELSEA.

Residents have for many years called for the establishment of a central, dynamic “town center” for the City of Chelsea. A town center would serve as a central hub of community life, accommodating daytime, evening, and weekend activity by incorporating a lively mix of uses in a compact, walkable district. While such places can be complicated to develop, growing suburbs such as Chelsea across the country have recognized the value of establishing them as their community focal point.

Action FLU 1.1

Assemble a team of committed volunteers to steer the development of a new town center.

A crucial first step in creating a town center for Chelsea is the establishment of a steering team to direct this complex effort. This group of dedicated volunteers would work with City staff, planning commissioners and councilors to develop a workable plan that would leverage public and private funding, stimulate investment, and tailor future development to match Chelsea’s unique character. The team would first be responsible for setting out the guiding principles for future development. These principles would express the broader community’s goals for a town center, including land use, building design, civic activities, and pedestrian connectivity. The team would also be responsible for commissioning the development of a master plan and overseeing the implementation of that plan.

The development of a town center will be a very long and slow process, and this is okay – healthy communities evolve organically over long periods of time. A steering team will help guide this process in a manner agreeable to the needs and preferences of the residents of Chelsea.

What Citizens Said

- Concern over rapid pace of growth
- Concern over sprawling development patterns
- Need a town center with a “village feel” to serve as the heart of the community
- Need more walkable neighborhoods
- Housing starting to become unaffordable
- Need viable senior housing option
- Utilize subdivision regulations to improve neighborhood walkability
- Need more office and industrial space
- Ensure high quality public realm when attracting new businesses
- Need more estate lots to meet market demand

About “What Citizens Said” Boxes

The Comprehensive Plan was developed through rigorous public engagement and citizen input. A variety of methods for obtaining the community’s desires for future growth were used to create these policies. Refer to Appendix A “Public Involvement Summary” for more information on these efforts and their results.
**Action FLU 1.2**

**Modify the Zoning Ordinance to create a mixed-use zoning district.**

A successful town center depends upon a diverse mix of compatible uses organized around a walkable grid and vibrant public spaces. Such places do not occur overnight – they are gradually built out by multiple developers over long periods of time as the community evolves. The City should therefore carefully consider what zoning district(s) it will use to regulate development of the town center. The existing Planned Mixed Use District (PMD) is an effective tool for master-planned subdivisions, but might lack the flexibility to enable a town center to develop incrementally, organically, and with the density necessary to make it a true center for the community. Instead, the City should consider creating a mixed-use zoning district for the application to its future town center.

A mixed-use zoning district permits a diverse mix of housing, civic, and commercial uses, including retail, restaurants, and offices, both in vertical and horizontal dimensions. It does not require shopfronts with housing above; it simply permits this and other flexible arrangements of uses that can shift to adapt to evolving community preferences. It can also include design standards that promote walkable development, such as small block sizes, buildings that face the street, and parking lots behind buildings. By focusing regulation on the form and feel of development and allowing more flexibility in choice of uses, a mixed-use district will not only help a town center get built, it will help it thrive.

**Action FLU 1.3**

**Establish a town center development authority to facilitate investment by reducing risk and exposure.**

While walkable town centers are popular among residents, they can prove risky investments for developers due to specialized design constraints and limited economies of scale. This risk can deter investment, leading to an uninviting and undeveloped district. In order to encourage initial development and future redevelopment of the town center, the City should consider establishing a town center development authority to implement strategies that reduce risk and exposure to private developers. A town center development authority could oversee the financing and construction of public improvements in the district, subsidize ground leases, and anchor development with civic uses, among other tools.

**What is a town center?**

“A town center is an enduring, walkable, and integrated open-air, multiuse development that is organized around a clearly identifiable and energized public realm where citizens can gather and strengthen their community bonds. It is anchored by retail, dining, and leisure uses, as well as by vertical or horizontal residential uses. At least one other type of development is included in a town center, such as office, hospitality, civic, and cultural uses. Over time, a town center should evolve into the densest, most compact, and most diverse part of a community, with strong connections to its surroundings.”

- Urban Land Institute
The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan

**Figure 3.2: Potential Town Center Location**

- **County Highway 47**
  - Old Alignment
- **County Highway 47**
  - New Alignment
- Potential Town Center
- Future Community Park

---

**Action FLU 1.4**

**Complete the realignment of County Highways 47 and 39.**

In 2017, the City contracted with the RPCGB’s Advanced Planning, Programming, and Logical Engineering (APPLE) Program to evaluate possible improvements to the at-grade railroad crossing on County Highway 47 and its nearby intersection with County Highway 39. Long a source of local frustration, the railroad crossing causes frequent traffic jams at peak hour as trains move slowly through, or even stop on, the crossing. The APPLE study found that a grade-separated crossing (i.e., a bridge) would cost far more than the City could afford. However, it also found that significant operational improvements could be achieved through the much cheaper alternative of realigning the intersection of County Highways 47 and 39 further south than its existing location. While not eliminating traffic queues caused by the railroad crossing, it will help maintain traffic flow at the intersection by providing additional space for traffic to queue before it spills back into the intersection.

The City has chosen to construct this realignment. Because City leadership and residents wish to see the future town center in the area immediately surrounding the new intersection, it is important that the City work with Shelby County to complete its construction as soon as possible.
Action FLU 1.5

Develop a master plan for a walkable town center.

In close coordination with the Council, Planning Commission, and general public, the steering team should oversee the development of town center master plan. The plan should adhere to guiding principles articulated by the steering team while responding to the constraints of land availability and market realities. The plan should be developed with rigorous public involvement in order to incorporate fresh perspectives and secure residents' buy-in early on in the process.

During the public involvement phase of this Plan, City leadership and residents alike identified the area between County Highway 47, County Highway 39, and the Community Center as the ideal location for a town center. The master plan should ensure that future development is carefully connected to surrounding land uses, including the Community Center, the forthcoming Community Park, City Hall, and the adjacent neighborhoods. It should be organized around a very highly interconnected street grid that promotes walkability and convenient access to surrounding uses.

Walkable town centers near Chelsea

Chelsea residents don’t have to go far to find examples of walkable, mixed-use town centers. The Town of Mt. Laurel along Dunnavant Valley Road and the Preserve in Hoover are both organized around a dynamic, compact, and pedestrian-friendly town center with a variety of retail, office, and public space. The streets are deliberately designed for people rather than cars, with small block sizes, buildings that face the street, narrow roads that slow down traffic, and generous sidewalks and landscaping that invite people to walk.
FUTURE LAND USE GOAL 2

ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS.

Many communities in the Birmingham region are either fully built-out, or are experiencing no significant development pressure – or both. Chelsea, by contrast, is rapidly growing and still has ample space with which to grow. This places Chelsea in a unique position: it can proactively shape the nature of new development to ensure it accomplishes broader community goals such as walkability, connectivity, and sustainability. Chelsea residents want their community to be more than another mass of homogeneous subdivisions that are indistinguishable from those of surrounding cities. During the public involvement process, they expressed a strong desire for unique, walkable, vibrant neighborhoods with a variety of uses and amenities. This can be accomplished by implementing the following actions.

Action FLU 2.1

Encourage walkable, traditional neighborhood patterns.

Traditional neighborhood development (TND) is a planning technique that replicates the enduring and historic development patterns found in American towns, and applies these patterns to new development. Unlike conventional sprawling subdivisions, TNDs offer compact, pedestrian-friendly development with a mix of land uses that reduce reliance on the car. They accommodate all members of the community by including a variety of housing types and encouraging pedestrian movement with interconnected streets, thoughtful public spaces, and neighborhood-appropriate businesses. Their compact design requires less infrastructure per household, lowering future maintenance obligations on taxpayers. Development adhering to these principles can lead to vibrant, memorable neighborhoods that form the backbone of a community’s life and identity. Successful TNDs include:

- A community anchor that may feature a park, community meeting space, corner store, post office, library, or entertainment center. The community anchor is within a ¼ to ½ mile (5 to 10-minute walk) of homes.
- A variety of housing types for residents of various ages and socioeconomic levels.
- A mix of uses that support the essential needs of immediate residents, including shops, offices, and restaurants.
- A connected street network providing multiple travel options and reduces traffic congestion.
- Buildings that front the street, creating a sense of place by framing the sidewalks with street trees and building walls.
COUNTING THE COST – SUBURBAN SPRAWL VS. SMART GROWTH

All Chelsea residents are familiar with suburban sprawl – low density, automobile dependent, disconnected subdivisions that spread endlessly outward, consuming land and resources. It is the dominant form of suburban development, including most of Chelsea, because it is typically the cheapest form to build. It is not, however, the cheapest form to sustain. Sprawling, disconnected subdivisions create artificially high traffic congestion by forcing all motorists onto the same few roads, increasing travel times and fuel consumption per resident. More importantly, however sprawl costs a lot of money to extend and provide City services. It costs more money to repair a street or a water pipe that connects four homes spread over eight acres than four homes spread over one acre. Police and fire protection must travel greater distances to reach the same amount of people, exacerbating safety issues. Buses must travel farther and longer to reach the same amount of students. Over time, the cost of maintaining these far-flung services can push even the most responsible public entities into insolvency.

Smart growth, by contrast, describes development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, and development within existing neighborhoods rather than in undeveloped areas. Smart growth takes advantage of compact design to create walkable, enduring neighborhoods that preserve open space and rural land. It creates distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place that accommodate residents of all ages and backgrounds. It is also cheaper than conventional development – smart growth reduces annual public services per household by almost 10%. The keys to smart growth include directing development towards the community core where they can utilize existing community infrastructure, and using compact design that encourages walking and lowers municipal service costs per household. Smart growth helps the City satisfy development demand without excessive long-term infrastructure obligations. Chelsea is here for the long haul; it should invest in development patterns that it can afford to maintain for a long time.

Figure 3.3: Comparison of Selected Costs to Service Sprawl vs. Smart Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sprawl</th>
<th>Smart Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual cost per household to provide services</td>
<td>Annual cost per household to provide services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm &amp; Wastewater</td>
<td>$613</td>
<td>$147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Department</td>
<td>$406</td>
<td>$177</td>
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<td>$38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>$36</td>
<td>$19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Halifax Regional Municipality
Action FLU 2.2

Adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance to encourage compact and pedestrian-friendly new development.

Walkable neighborhoods will only be developed if they are allowed. By adopting a TND ordinance, Chelsea can provide the regulatory framework in which vibrant, walkable neighborhoods can be built. The ordinance should address the following components:

- Purpose and necessity of the provisions
- Applicability and criteria for qualifying uses under the ordinance
- Actual uses allowed
- Size, dimensions, and location of building structures to provide a healthy pedestrian environment
- Supplemental criteria, such as whether modifications are allowed, specific conservation-related goals and the relationship between the TND and other provisions such as signs, parking, etc.

There are two methods of incorporating a TND ordinance into Chelsea's municipal zoning code. One is to establish TND as a stand-alone zoning district, in which all permitted uses are subject to TND provisions. For example, the City could apply the ordinance to areas listed on the Future Land Use Map as "Traditional Neighborhood." Alternatively, the City can adopt it as a stand-alone zoning district.

Powder Springs TND Ordinance

The City of Powder Springs, Georgia, adopted a stand-alone Traditional Neighborhood District to provide great flexibility in site planning and building placement while incorporating enough standards to ensure that principles of traditional neighborhood developments are met. The District is intended to facilitate smart growth development in the city through the creation of planned small communities where citizens can live, work and enjoy recreational activities without dependence on the automobile. More information can be found at https://www.nlc.org/resource/tnd-ordinance-powder-springs-ga
Figure 3.4: Preferred Growth Areas
Direct future development toward Preferred Growth Areas.

Two simple facts emerged during the public involvement process: 1) Chelsea is growing rapidly, and 2) existing residents are concerned by this rapid pace of development. Residents fear the City handles land development and growth decisions piecemeal and reactively, without any coordinated plan and without regard to the ability of existing community infrastructure to support them. Rather than allowing rural areas to be haphazardly overrun by disjointed subdivisions that are costly to service and maintain, the City should proactively direct future development to Preferred Growth Areas. These are areas already well-served by existing community infrastructure, including police and fire protection, transportation, parks, schools, and other community facilities. Directing development into Preferred Growth Areas allows future residents to utilize existing infrastructure more efficiently, rather than necessitating the costly expansion of infrastructure into new areas. It would also preserve Chelsea’s rural character by relieving pressure to expand on the community’s periphery. Finally, concentrating development toward Preferred Growth Areas would create more walkable neighborhoods that are less dependent on the car to access essential goods and services.

Encourage a diverse economy by providing suitable land for commercial and light industrial investment.

During the public involvement process, residents and local business leaders highlighted the need for new employment opportunities as Chelsea continues to grow. To ensure that the local economy can adapt to evolving regional and global economic conditions, an adequate supply and variety of land must be available to attract new employers and to allow existing businesses to expand. Identifying specific areas for future industrial and commercial development or employment centers will allow the City to target funds for necessary infrastructure improvements. In addition to bolstering the local economy, the provision of suitable commercial and industrial land can enhance residents’ quality of life by improving the local jobs-housing balance. As a bedroom community, most Chelsea residents commute out of town for work, while very few workers commute in from elsewhere. This daily exodus leads to longer commute times and sales tax leakage as employees fight traffic on U.S. 280 and spend their money in other municipalities. By providing suitable space for employers such as the Foothills Business Park, the City can furnish its residents with more convenient job opportunities.
**Figure 3.5:** Neighborhood Commercial at County Highways 11 and 36

- Chelsea City Limits (2019)
- Half-mile buffer around intersection of County Highways 11 and 36

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**Target pedestrian-friendly commercial development at the intersection of County Highways 11 and 36.**

As Chelsea and Pelham both continue to grow along the County Highway 11 corridor, the intersection of County Highways 11 and 36 will hold increasingly valuable commercial potential. Future commercial development can take either a conventional, automobile-oriented, strip-style form that detracts from the community’s character, or a more traditional, walkable form that enhances the community’s character. The Planning Commission and Council have tools at their disposal to ensure future development creates the latter (see PS Actions 2.1 – 2.3). This area presents Chelsea leaders with a unique opportunity to promote development in accordance with their citizens’ preference for memorable, enduring, pedestrian-friendly places.

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“Making this a pedestrian- and outdoor-friendly city would be a breath of fresh air, and it would help us stand out in Shelby County.”

- planChelsea Visioning Survey
**FUTURE LAND USE GOAL 3**

**COORDINATE LAND USE WITH TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS.**

Land use and transportation decisions mutually reinforce one another. How we use our land impacts our transportation facilities and modes of travel; how we travel determines the ways in which we use our land. If Chelsea wishes to create more walkable neighborhoods unencumbered by congestion, it must prioritize land use patterns that encourage alternative transportation modes.

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**Action FLU 3.1**

**Encourage walkable, mixed-use developments that integrate different uses and reduce motor vehicle trips.**

The conventional pattern of suburban development consists of large tracts of land devoted to a single use and segregated from one another by large spaces, infrastructure, or other barriers. This forces residents to drive for practically every trip, further contributing to local congestion. As Chelsea grows, the City should actively encourage developments that strategically integrate a diverse mix of uses within compact, walkable developments so that residents can better access essential needs without getting behind the wheel.

**Action FLU 3.2**

**Ensure future developments improve pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular connectivity both within and without.**

As a city with much space to grow, Chelsea can still avoid making a crucial mistake plaguing its more developed neighbors: poor connectivity. Poor connectivity – the lack of convenient points of access within and between neighborhoods, make walking and bicycling inconvenient and dangerous, and further forces Chelsea residents to rely on a car for even the most basic trip. Development proposals should provide a high degree of pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular access within the development itself and between adjoining neighborhoods. Excessive cul-de-sacs and long blocks should be discouraged, while sidewalks, intersections, and street stubs that enable connections to future adjacent developments should be promoted.

**Action FLU 3.3**

**Direct commercial expansion to compact nodes clustered at major intersections instead of conventional highway strips.**

U.S. 280 is one of the most prosperous commercial corridors in the region, providing a vast array of goods and services along its entire stretch through the metropolitan area. Every Chelsea resident knows, however, that with this prosperity has come often nightmarish traffic congestion. That congestion is in large part attributable to poor land use planning, as businesses sprawled out along the highway, filling every gap with new structures and multiple driveway cuts that create dangerous turning movements and impede traffic flow. Chelsea can avoid this fate by concentrating future commercial development into distinct nodes at major road intersections served by well-phased traffic signals, rather than allowing the highway to be overrun by nondescript strip malls and parking lots. By clustering development into nodes, the City can encourage more attractive development aesthetics, can more efficiently utilize its precious highway frontage, and can preserve traffic operations along U.S. 280.

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**Image credit: City of New Albany**
FUTURE LAND USE GOAL 4
ENCOURAGE A WIDE RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES.

Like most suburbs on the metropolitan fringe, housing in Chelsea overwhelmingly consists of owner-occupied, single-family detached homes (see Appendix B Existing Conditions, Figure 12, pg. 7). While many residents would prefer to limit future residential development to this pattern, it is essential that the City recognize the importance of providing a range of housing choices. The qualities and development patterns that make Chelsea such a desirable location now may not always appeal to future generations. The City should allow sufficient flexibility in housing styles to respond to changes in community needs and preferences. If current trends hold, the number of total housing units in Chelsea could rise from 4,244 in 2017 to nearly 9,000 in 2045. By allowing this growth to include a broad spectrum of housing types, the City can ensure Chelsea will remain a vibrant, productive, and stable community for years to come.

Action FLU 4.1

Provide opportunities to develop a variety of housing types that meet the needs, preferences, and financial capabilities of Chelsea’s present and future residents.

When it comes to housing, one size does not fit all. A healthy community accommodates a variety of people, backgrounds, and lifestyles, including first responders, managers, janitors, teachers, seniors or retirees, young professionals, and those living with disability. The housing needs of the community will fluctuate over time as the city evolves. This will require the allocation of land for a diversity of housing choices, including estates, garden homes, townhomes, condos, live-work units, and others that cater to the preferences of all citizens.

Housing diversity offers the following benefits:

- **Economic development** – Diverse housing options at a variety of price points are critical to the local economy, as they improve the ability of businesses to recruit and retain employees that match their required skill sets.

- **Long-term economic stability** – Research has shown that communities with more variety in housing types have lower foreclosure rates in the long-run. Like a diversified investment portfolio, a community needs a broad range of housing choices in order to weather unpredictable economic cycles.

- **Accommodating our aging population** – As Chelsea’s proportion of senior citizens rises, so too will the demand for housing options that can accommodate them (see FLU Action 4.3 below). Having a variety of housing choices that address a broad spectrum of income levels and lifestyle choices will allow Chelsea seniors to remain in their homes and keep contributing to their community.

- **Sustaining Families** – Chelsea is a family-oriented community, and diverse housing options support the health and well-being of children and families. When housing needs are appropriately met, children are more likely to be healthy and perform well in school, and parents are more likely to participate in the workforce.
**Action FLU 4.2**

Encourage traditional neighborhood developments that offer a variety of housing choices.

In order to help provide a variety of housing choices as discussed in **FLU Action 4.1**, the City should encourage traditional neighborhood developments that include a variety of home sizes, types, and densities. This can be accomplished either through the City’s existing Planned Residential (PRD) and Planned Mixed-Use (PMD) districts, or with a potential mixed-use zoning district (see **FLU Action 1.5**). Both tools can be effective methods for promoting walkable, sustainable neighborhoods that meet the needs of all Chelsea’s residents.

**Figure 3.6: Growth in Housing Units, 2000 - 2045**

![Graph showing growth in housing units from 2000 to 2045.](image)

**Action FLU 4.3**

Encourage the development of viable senior housing options.

Notwithstanding its popularity among young families, Chelsea has a sizeable – and growing – proportion of senior citizens (see **Appendix B Existing Conditions**, Figure 5, pg. 4). During the public involvement process, several residents expressed concern over the lack of viable living choices for elderly, disabled, and special-needs citizens. It is critical that the City make it easier for these residents to remain in their homes and age in place with dignity.

The City can address the shortage of viable senior housing through a variety of approaches, including:

- Recruiting a private-payer senior housing facility to locate in an area compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and close to essential services.
- Allowing accessory dwelling units by-right in zoning districts deemed appropriate for senior living.
- Reducing or eliminating housing size minimums in mixed-use and traditional neighborhood areas to allow the provision of homes that senior citizens can comfortably manage.
- Requiring a certain percentage of homes in large developments to meet universal design standards.
**FUTURE LAND USE GOAL 5**

**PREPARE NATURAL OPEN SPACE AND EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.**

Residents frequently cited Chelsea's rolling open space and rural charm as a primary reason for moving to and remaining in the community. They are naturally concerned that future development could detract from these qualities. It is entirely possible, however, to satisfy development demand while preserving green space for future residents to enjoy. The following actions outline strategies to encourage development that protects Chelsea's rural and natural open space.

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**Action FLU 5.1**

**Encourage the development of conservation subdivisions to protect rural areas.**

During the public involvement process, residents frequently cited Chelsea's rural character as one of its greatest assets. Conservation subdivisions are an effective tool for preserving that character while also protecting the environment. Conservation subdivisions (also known as cluster subdivisions) are an alternative way of building traditional single-family subdivisions that "cluster" development on a site in order to preserve land as common open space for residents. These types of subdivisions have numerous benefits, both financial and environmental including:

- Higher home values
- Preservation of rural community character
- Reduced infrastructure costs per home
- Greater access to open space for residents
- Improved stormwater management
- Wildlife conservation

Chelsea currently has guidelines and standards for the creation of conservation subdivisions (see Zoning Ordinance, Section 9.12). To encourage developers to utilize these standards rather than conventional subdivision standards, the City should offer incentives such as expedited permitting, density bonuses, fee waivers, among others (see Action PS 1.3 for more options).

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**Action FLU 5.2**

**Add development standards for conservation subdivision to the subdivision regulations.**

The City of Chelsea currently describes development standards for conservation subdivisions only in the Zoning Ordinance; the subdivision regulations do not describe any such standards. As developers often first consult the subdivision regulations when considering a site, they might not realize that conservation subdivisions are an option available to them. Adding development standards for conservation subdivisions to the subdivision regulations will make the process clearer for everyone and could encourage their utilization.

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**Action FLU 5.3**

**Protect sites of historic significance as the City grows.**

There are a number of places in Chelsea today that serve as reminders of the community's past, such as Quinn Cemetery along Whisenhunt Road. As the city continues to develop, City officials should take care to ensure that these historic sites are preserved and marked so that future of Chelsea residents can connect with the generations that came before them and built their community into what it is today.
WHAT ARE CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS?

The image below depicts two types of development, both occurring on the same site, with the same number of housing units. The image on the left is for a conventional subdivision and the right for a conservation subdivision. As can be seen below, conservation subdivisions “cluster” development on a more compact piece of land, preserving the remainder for outdoor recreation, rural preservation, agriculture, and wildlife habitat. This type of development has myriad benefits compared to traditional subdivision design. It is easier to travel out of and within, it preserves rural farmland, it is better at managing stormwater and has been shown to have higher property values particularly over time. Ideally, in a conservation subdivision 50 to 70 percent of buildable land is set aside as open space by grouping homes on the developed portion of the land.

Conservation subdivisions are also ideal places to build new amenities such as recreational trails. While residents do lose out on large individual lots, this is more than made up for by the open space that can be provided to the community through higher density.

In the Visioning Survey associated with this Plan, additional walking trails along with nature study and conservation areas were the most desired types of park improvements by Chelsea residents. Trails and nature areas can be difficult for cities to establish due to the need to procure land via purchase or donation, however these amenities can be provided relatively easily by developers with large parcels of land. The City can provide incentives for developments that establish new walking trails or conservation areas. Finally, the developer stands to gain from this as housing developments with these development types are higher valued than those that do not provide such amenities.
Action FLU 5.4

Encourage development that respects natural topography and resources.

Chelsea’s traditional rural character is cherished by its residents. The City should make certain that future development is sensitive to the natural topography, views, drainage patterns, existing vegetation, and agricultural elements that define this character. The City should encourage developments that are sensitive to the natural landforms and that maintain scenic vistas and natural drainage patterns. Proposals involving massive cut and fill alterations that modify the visual character of the area should be avoided. The City should also ensure that all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve and incorporate existing trees into future development plans.

Action FLU 5.5

Protect sensitive water resources by observing a minimum riparian buffer.

See RGS Action 3.3.

Action FLU 5.6

Encourage the development of new neighborhood-scale parks in underserved residential areas and in new residential developments.

See RGS Action 2.7.

Figure 3.7: Environmentally Sensitive Areas

- Chelsea City Limits (2019)
- Wetlands
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Slopes > 20%
Cities have a number of legal and administrative tools they can use to preserve the natural environment, address stormwater and flooding issues, and guide development in a sustainable fashion. The table below lists some of the tools available and the environmental issues that they address. Some of these tools, such as ordinances and overlay districts, are directly administered by a city. Others, such as conservation easements, are tools that property owners and non-profit land banks use to preserve land; cities would function in a support capacity by encouraging their use to interested land owners and helping them clear any administrative hurdles that may exist.

Chelsea officials may find that a number of these tools or solutions are needed to address an area of concern. Some options are more comprehensive than others, and as such may require more up-front work, legal procedures, or planning. For example, both steep slopes ordinances and a mountain overlay districts address concerns due to erosion on higher elevations. An ordinance simply restricts development on grades over a certain percentage, making it relatively straightforward to administer. A mountain overlay district allows the City to incorporate the same regulations that a steep slopes ordinance would include, but it also would further allow the City to preserve scenic view sheds by incorporating aesthetic and density regulations that lie beyond the purview of a steep slopes ordinance. The City should use the table below to help guide decision making in determining what environmental regulations are most effective at preserving the scenic and rural charm of Chelsea as well saving on future administrative and infrastructure costs.

Table 3.2: Green Systems Preservation Toolbox

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue / Concern</th>
<th>Mountain Overlay District</th>
<th>Steep Slopes Ordinance</th>
<th>Conservation Subdivisions</th>
<th>Conservation Easements</th>
<th>Low Impact Development Subdivision Regulations</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key: Directly addresses: ⬜ Partially addresses: ⬜ Does not address: ○
“We can have the kind of city we want... We can be a place not just for driving through, but for arriving at.”

- Jeff Speck
Economic Development Goals.....65

**Goal 1:** Invest in branding and public realm improvements that make Chelsea a unique place to work, shop, dine, and play. .................................................................66

**Goal 2:** Market and recruit businesses that will diversify and complement existing businesses. .................................................................69

**Goal 3:** Provide the physical capacity for economic development. .................................................................71

**Goal 4:** Foster connections between the business community and local schools to improve career-readiness........................................73
Economic development, broadly speaking, is the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote local wealth creation and improve the quality of life of a particular area. These actions have classically centered around recruiting base industries—those that produce goods and services for export, thereby bringing outside dollars into the community that are then circulated to non-base industries.

The American economy is a new place, however. Changes in technology and employment preferences mean that placemaking is more important than ever before, as employers and employees alike prioritize local quality of life ever more highly. Jobs are increasingly moving to places that people want to live, rather than the other way around. Moreover, costly competition between communities for increasingly mobile and opportunistic businesses have demonstrated not only the futility of recruitment, but that real long-term wealth creation comes from local business expansion.

Technological innovation, globalization, and shifting consumer preferences create a fluid economic environment. The following actions outline strategies for Chelsea to diversify its economic development strategies to adapt to these disruptions, invest in local businesses, and create the kind of community that attracts all kinds of employers and employees.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1
INVEST IN BRANDING AND PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS THAT MAKE CHELSEA A UNIQUE PLACE TO WORK, SHOP, DINE, AND PLAY.

A defined identity helps a city compete for quality businesses and residents. Branding and land use policies are key components of defining that identity. While branding tells, land use shows – particularly through the public realm. Creating refreshing, distinctive places and mixed-use environments that allow employees to walk and bike to reach their jobs, daily needs, and entertainment would demonstrate Chelsea’s excellent quality of life, and can help it attract and retain a skilled workforce.

**Action ED 1.1**

Promote a unified branding strategy to help foster a community identity.

The City of Chelsea is currently refreshing its branding strategy with updated themes, concepts, and graphics. Once completed, the City should promote its updated material on all City websites, social media accounts, and anywhere else the City maintains a physical or online presence.

**Action ED 1.2**

Expand the reach and role of the Chelsea Business Alliance.

The Chelsea Business Alliance (“CBA”) is a group of local business representatives and owners committed to the development of a thriving local economy. Both CBA members and other local stakeholders would like to see the organization expand the services it provides to Chelsea citizens. They wish to see it grow into a more active partner for Chelsea business interests, hosting value-adding programs and communicating the importance of investing in local businesses to residents. The City should continue to work with the CBA to help it evolve into a valuable resource for Chelsea business owners and consumers.

**What Citizens Said**

- Sales tax leakage over the mountain
- Lack of qualified workforce
- Need medical, technology, and advanced manufacturing companies
- Need to expand commercial- and industrial-zoned land capacity
- Too many chain restaurants, need more locally-owned options
- Lack of affordable property to start or expand businesses
- Need co-op and apprenticeship programs for local students
- High small business turnover
- Need a home improvement store
- Need nightlife and family entertainment options
- Need a hotel
- Need more trade and light industrial jobs
Utilize the public realm as an economic development asset.

Creating memorable, unique places that differentiate Chelsea from other places can help attract quality businesses and employers to the City. Parks, natural resources, streetscapes, art and cultural amenities, and other public realm enhancements are no idle amusements – they are serious economic development tools that make a community a more attractive place to work to talented employees. The City should recognize their value and set aside a dedicated funding source for public realm improvements.

Encourage infill projects within existing strip commercial and “big box” commercial development sites to combat suburban sprawl and to create more compact walkable developments.

Land use patterns and zoning regulations should support infill retail, office, and mixed-use developments, rather than push retail to edge locations or facilitate the abandonment of existing retail centers as they age. As larger developments age, the massive parking lots that were once necessary may no longer be needed. As a result of this, these developments can look unattractive and tired, creating large desert-like landscapes of unused parking. One way to combat this is by implementing “sprawl repair” concepts.

“Sprawl repair” is the process that transforms potentially failing, single-use and car-dominated developments into complete and walkable centers that have better economic, social and environmental performance. The Sprawl Repair Manual by Galina Tachieva and Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company illustrates a set of remediation techniques to retrofit building types that define suburbia. The existing suburban buildings are re-purposed and/or joined by new structures, often taking advantage of suburbia’s typically excessive setbacks and parking lots. One such example is to “infill” large parking lots with surrounding businesses to improve the overall density, walkability, and urban form. Figures 4.1 illustrates these concepts.
Figure 4.1: Sprawl Repair

BEFORE

Existing Strip Center

AFTER

Proposed Building Additions

Expansion and re-purposing of strip center with multi-story wings and public plaza
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2
MARKET AND RECRUIT BUSINESSES THAT WILL DIVERSIFY AND COMPLEMENT EXISTING BUSINESSES.

Continuing to develop Chelsea's business base is critical to the community's long-term vitality. Business attraction and development efforts should help the City diversify its jobs base. All economies experience continuation shifts and disruptions as existing businesses close or move and new businesses are born. Recruitment should target those companies and entrepreneurs most likely to find Chelsea an attractive location with an appropriate workforce, and target industries consistent with the community's vision.

Action ED 2.1
Continue to partner with 58 INC., the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, and the Chelsea Business Alliance to identify and address business needs within Chelsea.

The City of Chelsea has access to three non-profit organizations dedicated to advancing balanced economic development in Chelsea and Shelby County. 58 INC. facilitates industrial, commercial, and retail recruitment, retention, and expansion, as well as workforce readiness initiatives throughout the County. The Shelby County Chamber of Commerce partners with community stakeholders to support existing businesses and encourages greater prosperity throughout the County. The Chelsea Business Alliance provides resources to existing businesses and serves as a communications bridge with the City government. All three organizations are valuable partners that the City should continue to engage with in order to identify the unique concerns and needs of the business community within Chelsea.

Image credit: Pitts Media

Action ED 2.2
Recruit additional sit-down and high-end restaurants.

There are over 20 food and drink establishments in the City of Chelsea today, many of which are fast food restaurants. Despite the preponderance of such establishments, nearly a quarter (23%) of Chelsea residents who participated in the Visioning Survey expressed the desire for additional sit-down and full-service dining options in Chelsea, noting that they frequently visited other cities to dine out. To encourage additional restaurants to Chelsea, the City should work with 58 INC. and to recruit additional restaurants to the City, particularly in the mixed-use districts such as the future town center area (see Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3 Future Land Use). Mixed-use developments attract more high-end tenants as opposed to fast-food or convenience-based dining due to the walkable environment they create.

Image credit: TripAdvisor
21% of residents believe the greatest challenge facing the City today is the lack of quality dining and shopping choices in Chelsea - more than traffic congestion, rapid growth, or any other option.

- planChelsea Visioning Survey

**Action ED 2.3**

**Recruit additional family-friendly entertainment options to the City.**

Chelsea has established itself as a desirable location for families. Between 2010 and 2018, the number of family households increased from 2,930 to 3,434, an increase of 17.2%. As one might expect from this trend, over 18% of Chelsea residents who participated in the Visioning Survey said that they would like to see additional family-friendly entertainment options. Currently, families must drive to other cities to visit such establishments. In order to retain sales tax revenue currently lost to other cities, the City should work with 58 iNC. to recruit additional family-friendly entertainment destinations to Chelsea.

**Action ED 2.4**

**Recruit a full-service hotel to locate within Chelsea.**

Chelsea is located on the edge of the largest metropolitan region in the state, along the busiest non-Interstate Highway in the region, and on the gameday travel route to a major state university (Auburn University). However, the City currently lacks a full-service hotel that could capitalize on these location advantages. It is recommended that the City work with 58 iNC. and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce to recruit a full-service hotel and conference center to Chelsea.

A hotel would support local businesses and organizations by accommodating vendors, employees, sales representatives, trade shows, gameday traffic, and sports tournaments as well as weddings, reunions, funerals, and other family events, most of whom would then purchase other goods and services in Chelsea. A hotel would also support local clubs and civic organizations by housing guests and providing meeting spaces.

**Action ED 2.5**

**Recruit additional outpatient and urgent care providers.**

During the public involvement process of this Plan, residents and City leaders highlighted a lack of outpatient and urgent care providers in Chelsea. As the City’s population of both young (age 0-19) and old (55+) residents continues to rise, it will become increasingly important that they have access to nearby outpatient and urgent medical care services without having to drive along U.S. 280. The City should work with 58 INC. to recruit providers of these services as the City grows.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3
PROVIDE THE PHYSICAL CAPACITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Quality jobs can only come to Chelsea if there is a place for them to go. Protecting prime sites for industrial and office use from competing demands will help ensure that Chelsea can continue to offer competitive locations for new and expanding businesses.

Action ED 3.1
Continue to develop the Foothills Business Park to recruit medical technology companies to Chelsea.

The opening of the Therachem research facility at the Foothills Business Park signaled a new chapter in Chelsea’s development, in which the City has begun to attract employers that can tap into Chelsea’s highly educated workforce. The City should continue to work with iNC. to recruit medical technology firms and startups to the office park to provide additional employment opportunities for local residents in these high-growth, high-wage industries.

Action ED 3.2
Continue to explore potential land for new industrial parks and other employment centers.

While the Foothills Business Park was an important step toward attracting quality employers to Chelsea, its capacity is limited; it comprises only five sites spread over 13.5 acres. Local business leaders expressed concern that the lack of industrial-zoned land within City limits deters investment from employers who want to locate in Chelsea to take advantage of its talented workforce. As Chelsea continues to grow, the City must ensure additional properties in suitable locations are available for office and industrial uses.

Action ED 3.3
Establish a spec building at a future industrial park with the aid of the Speculative Building Program.

When the City identifies suitable land for a future light industrial park, it should consider working with Alabama Power’s Speculative Building Program to establish a spec building – a highly-customizable space ready for occupancy by an industrial tenant. The program offers no-interest loans to qualifying entities (including a municipality) with an appropriate site to finance the cost of constructing a spec building. Appropriate sites must be located in an industrial park encompassing 75 acres or more, among other requirements. Local business leaders cited the program as a powerful tool for attracting employers that fit Chelsea’s employment profile.
Figure 4.2: Foothills Business Park

Image credit: Soliant Health

Image credit: Select Georgia
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4  
FOSTER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND LOCAL SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE CAREER-READINESS.

Chelsea's greatest economic asset is its highly educated workforce. As national and regional economies shift toward knowledge-based industries, skilled and trained workers are becoming essential to compete successfully for new and growing businesses. Providing residents with quality jobs depends on ensuring they can prepare themselves with the full range of necessary skills, from basic literacy and life skills to technical retraining for older adults.

Action ED 4.1  
Use the Building (it) Together report to coordinate local workforce development initiatives with regional needs and goals.

In 2018, a broad partnership of regional organizations commissioned the Building (it) Together report, which outlines strategies to align the Birmingham region’s education and workforce development initiatives with new and emerging jobs. The report finds that the region’s economic success hinges on its ability to transition labor from low-skill to high-skill, high-demand industries such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biotechnology, and information technology (IT). It provides several broad workforce-related recommendations to enable that investment, including technical training and co-op opportunities.

Chelsea has a very highly educated workforce. Significantly more Chelsea residents have earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees than the regional average (see Appendix B Existing Conditions, Figure 8, pg.5). In order to help its talented workforce capitalize on its potential, the City should ensure that future workforce development strategies are coordinated with those of its neighbors throughout the greater Birmingham region.

Image credit: Birmingham Business Alliance

Action ED 4.2  
Promote employment opportunities in growing high-wage industries such as trades, engineering, IT, and medical technology.

Nearly 30% of Chelsea residents work in retail, food services, warehousing, and other low-wage industries that are either stagnating or are especially vulnerable to automation in coming years. The City should work with local and regional economic development partners to actively promote employment opportunities in industries with stable or positive growth outlooks, such as building trades, engineering, IT, and medical technology. An employment base tied to employment sectors with favorable long-term prospects will help the City better weather economic volatility caused by business cycles, technological disruptions, and globalization.
The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan

Action ED 4.3
Resume monthly job fairs at the Chelsea Community Center.

The Chelsea Community Center has for many years hosted monthly job fairs. Due to an exceptionally tight labor market with low regional unemployment rates, very few residents have attended recent fairs, prompting its temporary suspension. The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent economic shutdown have dramatically changed the economic landscape, however. Unemployment and underemployment have skyrocketed nationwide, and the lingering effects of this shock will find their way to Chelsea too. In order to help local employers capitalize on the loosening labor market and assist local residents find employment, the City should resume its monthly job fairs at the Community Center as economic conditions demand, and as public health requirements allow.

Action ED 4.4
Expand local co-op and apprenticeship opportunities for high school students and recent graduates.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, local business leaders expressed concern over the lack of interface between the business community and prospective employees. Many local students and recent graduates, they said, are unaware of the career opportunities available to them through local employers, threatening the succession and continuity of local businesses. The City can help address these issues by working with local employers to expand co-op, internship, and apprenticeship programs for local students and recent graduates. Such programs would facilitate the transfer of knowledge between generations of workers by allowing students, trainees, and novice entrepreneurs to work alongside experienced professionals, while also retaining local talent for local employers.

Action ED 4.5
Promote Shelby County’s Career Technical Educational Center to local students.

The Shelby County Career Technical Education Center (CTEC) in Columbiana provides career training opportunities and resources to students at all Shelby County High Schools in Grades 10-12. CTEC offers interactive learning experiences in biomedical sciences, robotics and advanced manufacturing, welding, and many other high-demand skills and trades. Because local business leaders have repeatedly stressed the difficulty in retaining skilled labor, the City should continue to actively promote CTEC to its local students.
chapter five
Recreation and Green Systems

“Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt.”

- John Muir
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Goal 1: Ensure that parks and recreational facilities are safe and well maintained.................. 78

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Goal 3: Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development. ............................. 85

Image credit: City of Chelsea
RECREATION AND GREEN SYSTEMS

Abundant green space – natural and man-made, programmed and passive – has drawn residents to Chelsea for decades. In a community as brimming with young families as Chelsea, access to quality parks, sports, and other family-friendly recreational outlets is critical to a high quality of life. Natural spaces, too, including forests, streams, and wetlands contribute to Chelsea’s abundant green infrastructure – the natural and man-made systems that allow nature to carry out its processes in harmony with the built environment.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, residents expressed concern with the threat that new development poses to this green space. Chelsea is a growing community – but this growth need not diminish the viability of the natural environment or the quality of its recreational outlets. This chapter focuses on how the City of Chelsea can preserve its cherished green space for generations to come.

When you see a town that uses its park as the place to bring the town together . . . then the park becomes much more than just a small playground. It is the place where a town becomes a community – and a community becomes a home.

- Chelsea resident
RECREATION AND GREEN SYSTEMS GOAL 1
ENSURE THAT PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ARE SAFE AND WELL MAINTAINED.

Chelsea residents cherish their parks and sports programs, but many voiced concerns with the quality of maintenance. City staff responsible for maintaining public parks and fields concurred, citing limited resources for proper upkeep. For Chelsea to continue to provide quality recreational programs for its residents, the City leaders must be strategic about how they maintain existing and future recreational facilities.

Action RGS 1.1
Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City to guide future investments.

Chelsea’s parks and recreation system, one of residents’ most cherished community features, is facing mounting challenges. City staff are already strained to maintain existing assets with limited staffing and aging resources. At the same time, residents increasingly call for new recreational opportunities and expanded amenities at existing parks. Moreover, over 90% of Chelsea residents live farther than a 10-minute walk to the nearest public park – meaning children cannot access a park, playground, or ballfield unless someone drives them. Chelsea should therefore commission a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the City to create the best possible park system for its citizens over the next 20 years. A master plan would set the City’s parks and recreation goals and priorities for the future. Some key elements of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan may include:

- A detailed audit of existing park facilities analyzing current equipment conditions and park needs.
- Potential site selection for future parks based on creating more park space within a 10-minute walk of residential areas.
- Identification and then prioritization of future investments in the park system, including properties, equipment, and other capital assets.
- A plan for addressing staff needs and future hires.

Additionally, a detailed Parks and Recreation Master Plan may further help prioritize implementation of numerous other actions within this chapter.

What Citizens Said

- Sprawl is squeezing out green space
- Need a Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Need a walking trail along Yellowleaf Creek
- Need a new basketball course
- Improve sports field upkeep
- Softball fields have poor drainage
- Need more neighborhood-scale parks
- Need a Parks and Recreation Board
- City lacks sufficient staff and equipment to maintain existing ballparks
- Need a dog park
- Need a splash pad
- Need soccer fields
- Preserve forest cover and green space
- Lack of awareness that tennis courts are available to public use
- Need more senior sports and activities
- Improve lighting in parks
- Need a public park in the Narrows
**Action RGS 1.2**

Consider forming a Parks and Recreation Board to run sports leagues and assist existing staff.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, City staff expressed the need for a volunteer Parks and Recreation Board. A board could aid existing Parks and Recreation staff in the setting of annual goals, setting budget priorities, and assisting in the management of sports leagues. Board members could volunteer to assist individual leagues or specific age groups within those leagues to reduce the burden on existing staff. In addition, if the City chose to develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the board would be responsible for overseeing its implementation.

**Action RGS 1.3**

Hire additional grounds keepers to maintain public parks and ball fields.

Chelsea Parks and Recreation staff have expressed difficulty in keeping up with maintenance issues in Chelsea’s park system. The City should therefore consider hiring additional grounds keepers. To save cost, these hires could be seasonal contractors to address needs during the spring and summer, when more sports leagues are active and maintenance can be a bigger issue. The City could also consider using landscaping contractors to maintain certain aspects of Chelsea’s park system if current funding does not allow for the hiring of additional staff.

**Action RGS 1.4**

Improve drainage at the softball fields.

Chelsea Parks and Recreation staff noted that the softball fields do not drain well, often causing the cancellation of events due to flooding. In order to keep the fields open to play and ensure their long-term viability, the City should contract with a licensed engineer to evaluate strategies to improve drainage for the softball fields.

**Action RGS 1.6**

Replace aging maintenance equipment.

As part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan or an individual effort, the City should conduct an audit of existing equipment and machinery to better assess replacement needs and priorities. Upon conducting the audit, the City should determine an annual budget to allocate funding for the highest priority equipment replacement(s).
RECREATION AND GREEN SYSTEMS GOAL 2
EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.

A growing population and shifting preferences have generated new recreational needs. While practically every resident in the City has a yard for their own, a variety of public recreational spaces is nonetheless critical to fostering a healthy and connected community. As the City of Chelsea expands, it should get creative in making sure that new recreational opportunities and gathering spaces are available to its residents.

Action RGS 2.1
Advertise available parks and recreation opportunities to current residents.

Chelsea offers an array of excellent sports and recreational opportunities, but not everyone is aware of their availability. During the public involvement process of this Plan, residents consistently voiced the need for public tennis courts, despite the fact that such courts are already available to them on County Highway 51. Moreover, many residents expressed frustration at the lack of communication regarding the status of the forthcoming park located behind the Community Center.

In order to ensure that all its citizens are able to take advantage of Chelsea’s wide range of recreational opportunities, the City should promote them more broadly. Some possible methods include:

- Advertise existing and forthcoming facilities on the City’s website, social media, and in flyers at public buildings.
- Update the City’s website with a facilities list to detail existing amenities, equipment, hours of operation, scheduling, and other relevant information at each facility.

Action RGS 2.2
Consider constructing a dog park.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, a dog park was one of the most frequently cited desires out of all public amenities. Dog parks are increasingly popular for dog owners throughout the country. As such, the City should consider establishing a public dog park within an existing city park or in another suitable location. The City of Alabaster has a successful dog park called Beneful Dream Dog Park that can be used as a case study when considering its placement, establishment, and operation. Some components of a successful dog park include:

- Fenced leash-free areas that separate small (35 lbs. and below) and large dogs for safety
- Pet waste stations
- Covered sitting areas with picnic tables
- Water drinking stations for owners and pets
- Obstacles and varied terrain for dogs to play on

Image credit: Pitts Media
Image credit: 280 Living
Explore the feasibility of a walking trail along potentially suitable routes such as Yellowleaf Creek, Little Creek, and/or Old Highway 280.

While right-of-way acquisition and engineering costs can pose serious challenges to the establishment of any trail, their enormous potential benefits to the local economy and quality of life should not be overlooked. In addition to preserving a portion of Chelsea’s beloved rural setting for future generations to enjoy, trails can also draw regional visitors who spend up to $18 per person per day at local shops and restaurants.

There are several partners in the Greater Birmingham area committed to creating facilities such as these. The Freshwater Land Trust has helped to implement and construct over 100 miles of trails throughout the region. The RPCGB’s Advanced Planning, Programming, and Logical Engineering (APPLE) program has helped fund feasibility studies for similar trails in the region. The City of Chelsea should commission its own feasibility study for this popular and potentially transformative project.

Figure 5.1: Yellowleaf Creek Trail

- Chelsea City Limits (2019)
- Yellowleaf Creek (with North and South Forks)
**Action RGS 2.4**

**Expand the Chelsea Community Center to allow space for a second basketball gym.**

As funding allows, the City should allocate resources to an expansion of the existing community center to allow for a second basketball gym. Currently, the single gym struggles to meet the needs of a growing community and limits the size of potential youth and adult leagues. The feasibility, cost, and priority of this expansion should be considered as part of a greater Parks and Recreation Master Plan effort as described in **Action RGS 1.1**.

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**Action RGS 2.5**

**Consider renting soccer fields from Shelby County to offer soccer opportunities to Chelsea families.**

As one of the most popular youth sports in the country, Chelsea residents would like to see opportunities for soccer within the City. As new park space is considered, establishing soccer fields built to youth sizes should be a priority. In the meantime, the City should work with Shelby County to offer soccer league opportunities to Chelsea residents by renting the County’s fields. Close potential venues include Sports Blast Shelby County and the soccer fields at the Forest Park Recreation Area.

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**Action RGS 2.6**

**Consider constructing a trail head into Oak Mountain off of County Highway 11.**

Chelsea is fortunate to border Oak Mountain State Park (Alabama’s largest state park at 9,940 acres) along County Highway 11. Oak Mountain has a great variety of recreational opportunities including hiking, mountain biking, horse-back riding, fishing and more. Currently, Chelsea lacks immediate trail access to the park and residents must drive to one of two available entries along State Route 119 in Pelham. During the public involvement process of this Plan, several residents called for a trailhead on the southeast side of the park that would offer more convenient access to Chelsea residents.

It should be noted that Oak Mountain charges $5 per person for entry, and adding a new trailhead could create additional staffing and resource obligations that the State Park cannot afford. It should also be noted, however, that Pelham residents living along County Highway 11 voiced the same desire as part of their recent Comprehensive Plan, suggesting support for such an investment that is broader than only one community. The City of Chelsea should therefore partner with Pelham to reach out to the State Parks Division concerning the feasibility of southeastern trail head.
Establish new parks in currently underserved residential areas.

Parks make great communities, but not enough Chelsea residents have easy access to them. Less than ten percent of residents live within a 10-minute walk, or one half-mile, of a public park (see Figure 22, pp. 13-14 of Appendix B Existing Conditions). As Chelsea grows, this lack of access will limit residents’ quality of life. Not only do residents who live within walking distance of a park report higher qualities of life, but they are typically healthier and less prone to chronic diseases. Decades of research have demonstrated that proximity to parks and green spaces support health and wellness. In addition, proximity to pedestrian-accessible parks allow parents to make fewer car trips – thereby reducing local congestion – and are less limiting on recreational opportunities for all age groups.

The City should therefore enact policies that can increase the share of residents within walking distance of public parks or publicly accessible green space. These policies may include:

- Identifying locations for future parks of varying size near currently-underserved residential areas, possibly as part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan process.
- Directing future residential development as close as possible to existing or planned parks.
- Constructing sidewalks and bicycle facilities from existing parks to surrounding neighborhoods (see Action RGS 2.8 below).

Create pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing and future park space.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, residents expressed the desire to walk to parks and green space rather than getting in their cars, but cited a lack of sidewalks or other facilities as a deterrent. As such, the City should prioritize the construction of new sidewalk or trail facilities within one half-mile of existing parks and future parks.

Ensure the provision of passive spaces when establishing new parks in Chelsea.

Currently, much of the public park space in Chelsea is dedicated to sports and related activities. Will providing these active spaces is important, the City would benefit from green spaces that are not oriented toward any particular sport or activity as well. Such “passive” spaces would be aimed at creating community gathering spaces where residents can have a picnic, throw a frisbee, walk, or simply be outside. Regional examples of passive space include Railroad Park in Birmingham and Orr Park in Montevallo. Many residents expressed concern during the public involvement process of this Plan that there were too few recreation opportunities that were not already occupied by team sports. The City should ensure that future parks include sufficient passive space to satisfy all types of citizens’ recreation needs.

Passive and non-sports-related spaces might include:

- Walking trails
- Seating and picnic areas
- Water features
- Wetland and pond areas
- Playgrounds
- Exercise areas

Not just parks, but riding & walking paths along our roadways.

- Chelsea resident on preferred recreational amenities
**Figure 5.2: Gaps in Public Park Coverage**
RECREATION AND GREEN SYSTEMS GOAL 3

RESTORE AND SUSTAIN WATER QUALITY, NATURAL HABITATS AND GROUNDWATER BY INCORPORATING BEST PRACTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SITE DESIGN AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT.

Much of Chelsea’s success can be attributed to its scenic and rural landscapes. Throughout public involvement many residents cited the rural setting as one of the reasons they initially moved to Chelsea. As such the City should strive to protect and preserve the rural nature that still exists in Chelsea today by implementing the best practices, development incentives, and low impact development techniques described in this chapter.

Action RGS 3.1

Encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on all construction sites to control soil erosion and minimize sediment runoff.

As areas are developed, the number of paved surfaces increases and leads to an increase in stormwater volume and pollutants, which can harm lakes, rivers, and streams. To mitigate stormwater impacts from new development, the City should encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that treat, store, and infiltrate runoff onsite before it affects water bodies downstream. Innovative site design that reduces paved (impervious) surfaces and other green infrastructure practices are recommended to reduce flows and improve water quality. In addition, many of these BMPs provide green space for users of new development and improve the site’s aesthetics.

It is recommended that the City revise regulations to require and/or provide incentives for BMPs, such as:

- **Stormwater Fee Discount**: Require a stormwater fee that is based on impervious surface area. If property owners reduce the need for service by reducing impervious area and the volume of runoff discharged from the property, the municipality reduces the fee.
- **Development Incentives**: Offered to developers during the process of applying for development permits. Examples include density bonuses, expedited permitting, and reduced stormwater requirements.
- **Grants**: Provide direct funding to property owners and/or community groups for implementing a range of green infrastructure projects and practices.
- **Rebates & Installation Financing**: Provide funding, tax credits or reimbursements to property owners who install specific practices. Often focused on practices needed in certain areas or neighborhoods.
- **Awards & Recognition Programs**: Provide marketing opportunities and public outreach for exemplary projects. May include monetary awards.

Action RGS 3.2

Incentivize developers to use Low Impact Development (LID) practices or green infrastructure techniques in new developments to mimic natural hydrology where feasible and minimize impacts of stormwater runoff on Creeks and Streams.

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to site planning, design and development that seeks to avoid, minimize and manage impacts to water resources by stewarding and reintroducing natural hydrological processes into developed watersheds.

The City could offer the following financial and/or regulatory incentives to provide developers, nonprofits, and homeowners who utilize LID or green infrastructure practices:

- Expedited permitting and review process
- Density bonuses
- Waivers of application, permit, or impact fees
- Sales tax rebates
- Tax credits
**Action RGS 3.3**

Protect sensitive water resources by enforcing the stream buffer provisions of the Design and Construction Specifications.

Streams and wetlands are important assets to Chelsea and should be protected. New development increases risks to water quality, habitat, and overall stream health due to the increase in pollutants and stormwater. The City’s Design and Construction Specifications help mitigate these effects by requiring a minimum riparian buffer of 25 feet for new development (see Chelsea Design and Construction Specifications, pg. 75). Riparian buffers (also known as filter strips, streamside vegetation, riparian zones, and buffer strips) are permanently vegetated transition zones that connect upland areas to streams. Vegetation helps to slow runoff velocity, diffuse flow, and reduce nonpoint source (NPS) pollution before it enters streams. In addition to filtering pollutants, riparian buffers help to stabilize stream banks and provide food and shelter to wildlife. Furthermore, riparian buffers create additional opportunities for green spaces, such as educational classrooms, pocket parks, and future greenway expansions. The City should ensure that all new developments adhere to this 25-foot buffer requirement to protect Chelsea’s sensitive wetlands and streams.

**Action RGS 3.4**

Pursue opportunities for acquisition, conservations and restoration of open space along year-round streams and rivers and actively protect these resources through land use management, steep slope development regulations, conservation subdivisions, and cluster development.

Chelsea is blessed with ample natural open space with several year-round streams and creeks within the city limits. Where possible, this land should be protected through various means by the City and preserved to protect vital natural resources, water quality, recreational space, and wildlife habitat.

A number of options the City should consider to protect critical habitat and streams include:

- Offer incentives for conservation subdivisions (see Action FLU 5.1).
- Encourage private landowners and developers to partner with Freshwater Land Trust to conserve sensitive land through conservation easements and land donations.
- Consider adopting a steep slopes ordinance to protect scenic vistas and reduce stormwater runoff and erosion (see Callout Box on pg. 62).
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS)

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are used to mitigate the effects of development and redevelopment (pollutants to waters, stormwater runoff, stream erosion, etc.). In developed areas, impervious surfaces, like pavement and roofs, prevent water from naturally soaking into the ground. Instead, water runs rapidly into storm drainage systems and natural streams causing flooding, stream bank erosion, sediment, habitat destruction, sewer overflows, infrastructure damage, and contaminated streams, rivers, and other water bodies. Impervious surfaces also reduce recharge of groundwater, which, during drought, reduces the base flow discharge into rivers and streams that maintains water levels. BMPs help to mitigate this effect by incorporating systems that allow infiltration, evapotranspiration, and re-use of stormwater to maintain natural hydrology. Careful management of BMPs that infiltrate surface runoff to groundwater should be considered to protect the City’s drinking water source because they could inject pollutants. All of the BMP practices listed below are referenced from the City of Baltimore’s Green Pattern Book.

**Rain Gardens:**
Rain gardens are shallow, vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff from rooftops, sidewalks and streets. The rain gardens are used as a Low Impact Development (LiD) stormwater management solution that promotes evapotranspiration, which is the effort of evaporation and transpiration to remove water from the soil and vegetation. These gardens are typically smaller and simpler than a bioretention system – they are less than 2,000 square feet in size and do not include an under-drain. Rain gardens are versatile features that can be installed in almost any unpaved space.

**Bioretention:**
The bioretention process utilizes a bed of sand, soil, and plants to filter contaminants and pollutants from stormwater runoff. Although water may briefly pond during heavy rain events, bioretention areas are designed to be dry most of the time. The filtered stormwater is either returned to a storm drain through an under-drain or partially infiltrated into the soil. Like rain gardens, bioretention areas may also be vegetated.

**Green Parking:**
Green parking differs from traditional asphalt parking lots by incorporating permeable paving materials, tree planting, and rain gardens that capture stormwater runoff and shade surfaces, thus improving water quality and cooling the parking areas. Green parking would provide residents, faith-based organizations, and businesses in the community additional parking that cannot otherwise be accommodated on the street or one’s property.

**Planter Boxes:**
Urban rain gardens with vertical walls and open or closed bottoms that collect and absorb runoff from sidewalks, parking lots, and streets. Planter boxes are ideal for space-limited sites in dense urban areas and as a streetscape element.

**Bioswales:**
Vegetated, mulched, or xeriscaped channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Vegetated swales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows. As linear features, vegetated swales are particularly suitable along streets and parking lots.

**Permeable Pavements:**
Paved surfaces that infiltrate, treat, and/or store rainwater where it falls. Permeable pavements are constructed from pervious concrete, porous asphalt, permeable interlocking pavers, and several other materials.
“If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.”

- Fred Kent
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Goal 4: Preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system................................................ 109
Few issues affect residents’ quality of life as visibly as transportation. After all, no one wants to spend any more time in their car than they need to, nor feel in danger when trying to walk or bike somewhere. Planning a safe, efficient, multimodal transportation system is critical to a successful city. A well-planned transportation network is not just about moving cars quickly – it’s about moving people safely, regardless of how they choose to travel. Like all postwar suburbs, Chelsea has been designed around the car, to the exclusion of every other mode of travel. The result is a community where residents cannot walk or bike even if they would like to, and where all vehicle trips are concentrated onto a few overburdened roads. With so much space yet to be developed, Chelsea lies at a critical juncture: will it continue on with the status quo, or will it invest in a safe, balanced, multimodal network that serves the needs of all its citizens?

Traffic congestion was one of the most frequently cited challenges facing the Chelsea today during the public involvement phase of this Plan. The bulk of this congestion occurs on U.S. 280 or at railroad grade crossings – places where the City of Chelsea has no jurisdiction. The City must therefore get creative in how it addresses these issues. This chapter offers a variety of creative solutions. It outlines strategies to develop a safe, interconnected multimodal network that improves operational efficiency for motorists and non-motorists alike, reduces residents’ dependence on the car, and supports sustainable land use patterns.
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 1
BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES.

For the past 70 years, cities have been designed around the automobile. This has unfortunately led to cities that are functionally car-dependent, and the true costs of that dependency are rapidly becoming apparent. Nationwide, monthly transportation costs are beginning to rival housing costs. Locally, no Chelsea resident can access any essential needs or services without getting in a car. Investing in a multimodal transportation network that accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists is critical not only to creating an attractive place to live, but also to ensuring the aging, disabled, and distressed can also call Chelsea home.

What Citizens Said
- Concern over congestion on U.S. 280
- Poor walkability within and between neighborhoods
- Need bicycle facilities on County Highways
- Need more sidewalks
- Poor wheelchair accessibility
- Need stricter access management along U.S. 280
- Long backups at at-grade railroad crossings
- Deteriorating street pavement in subdivisions
- Speeding along U.S. 280 and County Highways
- Concern over traffic in front of Post Office
- Need walking trail along Yellowleaf Creek

Action TI 1.1
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.

There can be no multimodal system without multimodal roads. Roadways have traditionally been designed around motor vehicles. This has created barriers to pedestrians, bicyclists, the disabled, and all other types of users, limiting transportation choice and public health benefits. By contrast, “complete streets” are streets designed for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Complete streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work by carefully incorporating sidewalks, bike lanes, traffic calming, and other design techniques that enable all residents to get the most of their streets.

In order to create complete streets, communities and their partners must change their approach to the design of roads. A Complete Streets Policy is a non-binding resolution stating that a community will routinely design and operate its streets to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode. It says the community will consider how to accommodate all users in the construction of new roads and the repairing of existing roads. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to designing complete streets, but a Complete Streets Policy would establish Chelsea as a local leader in developing a multimodal transportation network for its citizens.
Action TI 1.2

Construct context-sensitive bicycle infrastructure along strategic roadways.

Residents consistently called for the development of meaningful bicycle and pedestrian connections in order to counter Chelsea’s automobile dependency. Fortunately, the City does not have to reinvent the wheel to create transportation choices for its residents. Two recently completed regional-scale bicycle plans exist that identify strategic roadway corridors for bicycle connections to and within Chelsea – the B-Active Plan and the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The 2019 B-Active Plan is the Active Transportation Plan for the Greater Birmingham region that was developed by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The purpose of the plan is to establish a clear vision for building and expanding a multimodal transportation network in Jefferson and Shelby counties, and in parts of Blount and St. Clair Counties, with a specific focus on creating a safer, more connected, and equitable active transportation system for the region. The 2018 Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides the County and its local partners with guidance on the construction of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities at a county-wide level. Both plans were prepared by teams of engineers and planners with extensive technical expertise in multimodal planning and were developed with extensive public involvement.

Since many of the desired routes for bicycling that were identified by the public coincide with those identified in the B-Active Plan and the Shelby County plan, all recommended roadway segments for bicycle infrastructure have been compiled into Table 6.2. The City should use this table to help determine implementation priority for new bicycle infrastructure and facilities, beginning with those segments identified by both plans and by public involvement during the development of this Comprehensive Plan. As funding and rights-of-way become available, the City should work with the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization and Shelby County to construct context-sensitive bicycle infrastructure on these roadway segments.
**Action TI 1.3**

Expand sidewalk coverage to connect residents with essential needs and recreational opportunities.

Safe pedestrian connections are a critical component of an equitable transportation system, and Chelsea currently has very few. Improved walkability was a consistent theme throughout the public involvement process. The few sidewalks that currently exist in Chelsea are almost entirely contained within subdivisions, leaving residents no means of walking to any other destination. Rather than construct new sidewalks in an ad hoc manner, this Plan recommends that the City should instead prioritize new sidewalk construction using three tools: the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, a sidewalk suitability analysis, and public input.

As discussed above in Action TI 1.2, the development of the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was intended to guide County decision-makers on the construction of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities at a county-wide level, establishing a realistic and implementable network that connects residents to essential destinations. In addition to the County’s recommendations, this Plan also created a sidewalk suitability analysis that identified locations with the highest potential demand for pedestrian activity based on a number of indicators associated with a demand for walking. Appropriate walking radii or buffer distances were mapped from the locations of these indicators, and then the roadway segments that fell within these buffer areas scored points. Indicators included ¼ mile or ½ mile buffer distances from parks, schools, grocery stores, public facilities and existing sidewalks. The indicators, buffer distance, and associated scoring of each indicator are listed in Table 6.1. The highest possible score based on the indicators was an 11 with no roadway segment scoring above a 7 in the analysis.

Since many of the desired sidewalk locations identified by the public coincide with those identified in the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and in the sidewalk suitability analysis, Table 6.3 was created as a cross-reference table to help the City determine which roadway segments should be considered first for sidewalk construction if funding comes available. The table notes if a roadway segment is recommended in the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, notes its score based on the sidewalk suitability analysis, and notes if it was identified during the public involvement process of this Plan as a segment that is desired for new sidewalk construction. Table 6.3 only lists the highest-scoring roadway segments in this cross-reference analysis, but Figure 6.2 displays all roadway segments throughout the City that were included within the sidewalk suitability analysis.

### Table 6.1: Scoring Criteria for Sidewalk Suitability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sidewalk Suitability Analysis Indicators</th>
<th>Scoring Weight (in points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ½ mile of a park</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ¼ mile of a park</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ½ mile of a school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ¼ mile of a school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ½ mile of a grocery store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ¼ mile of a grocery store</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ¼ mile of a library, community center, or recreation center</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ½ mile of a library, community center, or recreation center</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments within ¼ mile of an existing sidewalk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road segments with ¼ mile of the senior center</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 6.2: Recommended Roadway Segments for New Bicycle Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway Segment</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Length (miles)</th>
<th>Recommended in the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</th>
<th>Listed in the regional B-Active Plan</th>
<th>Noted during Public Involvement as a Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>U.S. 280</td>
<td>Chelsea Community Center</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Highway 280</td>
<td>County Highway 11</td>
<td>Chelsea Corners Way</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>Chelsea Community Center</td>
<td>County Highway 69</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Highway 11</td>
<td>Pelham City Limits</td>
<td>Old Highway 280</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Highway 280</td>
<td>Narrows Drive</td>
<td>County Highway 11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>Chelsea Softball Fields</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>Chelsea Softball Fields</td>
<td>County Highway 69</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 43</td>
<td>Forest Lakes Boulevard</td>
<td>Old Highway 280</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>Old Highway 280</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Highway 49</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>County Highway 333</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Pumpkin Swamp Road</td>
<td>County Highway 49</td>
<td>County Highway 51</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>County Highway 440</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>U.S. 280</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>County Highway 36</td>
<td>County Highway 11</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>County Highway 11</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>U.S. 280</td>
<td>County Highway 437</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</table>
Figure 6.1: Recommended Roadway Segments for New Bicycle Facilities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway Segment</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Length (miles)</th>
<th>Recommended in Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</th>
<th>Noted during Public Involvement as a Priority</th>
<th>Sidewalk Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 337</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>Wanninger Way</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7*</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>County Highway 337</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>County Highway 337</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>County Highway 337</td>
<td>Wanninger Way</td>
<td>Forest Oaks Elementary School</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>Shirley Lane</td>
<td>County Road 337</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. 280</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>County Road 39</td>
<td>U.S. 280</td>
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<td>Chesser Crane Rd</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>U.S. 280</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Highway 337</td>
<td>Forest Oaks Elementary School</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Home Drive</td>
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<td>County Highway 337</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chelsea Corners Way</td>
<td>Old Highway 280</td>
<td>County Highway 47</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twin Oaks Circle</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>Twin Oaks Way</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweet Gum Driver</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>Pin Oak Drive</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Road 338</td>
<td>Charbo Lake Trail</td>
<td>County Highway 39</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.2: Recommended Roadway Segments for New Sidewalk Construction
B-Active Plan

The 2019 B-Active Plan is the Active Transportation Plan for the Greater Birmingham region that was commissioned by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The purpose of the plan is to establish a clear vision for building and expanding a multimodal transportation network in Jefferson and Shelby counties, and in parts of Blount and St. Clair Counties, with a specific focus on creating a cohesive system of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The plan identifies and prioritizes strategic projects to build a safer, more connected, and equitable active transportation system for the region.

Developed with the end-user in mind, the B-Active Plan focuses on increasing connectivity between major destinations, addressing major gaps in the regional bicycle and trail system today, and providing robust and flexible design solutions for all road types. The target user is the “interested but concerned” bicyclist. These users make up approximately 50% of the population and are interested in bicycling but are concerned for their safety. By designing new bicycle facilities for those users and increasing their degree of separation from automobiles, active transportation becomes safer and more viable for everyone.

As a region-wide plan, the B-Active Plan does not propose a comprehensive bicycle network within the Chelsea city limits but instead identifies a handful of key roadway segments within the City that would serve as regionally-significant active transportation routes, around which the City can develop their local share of the regional network.

The B-Active Plan takes a semi-prescriptive approach to bicycle facility recommendations recognizing that facility selection and design for a given road depends on many factors such as existing right-of-way, lane widths, budgetary constraints, etc. The B-Active Plan acknowledges that specific facility selection and design should be left to the judgement of the local design staff or consultant at the time of implementation. As such, the B-Active Plan provides a menu of context-specific design options for facility types based on the land use context a given roadway segment falls within. These land use contexts are divided into Urban Core, Urban, Suburban, Rural, and Rural Town. In Chelsea, only the Suburban and Rural land use contexts apply.

Appendix C of the B-Active Plan provides a list of projects by jurisdiction and project maps, and Appendix D provides the menu of cross-sections by land use context and a list of detailed cost estimates. Visit the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham website at www.rpcgb.org or the project website at www.B-Activeplan.com to download the B-Active Plan and to learn more.
Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

In 2018 Shelby County adopted the Shelby County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Plan is intended to guide County decision-makers on the construction of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities at a county-wide level. It establishes a realistic and implementable network that connects residents to essential destinations. While it refrains from detailed recommendations for facility types at specific locations, it instead outlines possible design solutions such as the following:

- Restriping of the roadway to include a bicycle facility where lane widths allow,
- Implementation of a road diet to better accommodate all users, and
- Addition of a bicycle accommodation on an improved shoulder or on a facility within 1 mile of the corridor.

Context Sensitive Design

The ideal bicycle facility in a busy downtown area may not be the ideal solution for a suburban neighborhood. A one size-fits all approach rarely makes sense when designing for unique areas. Different land use and development patterns present different challenges for active transportation users, so it is important to find the right facility type for a given road. The B-Active Plan takes a semi-prescriptive approach to facility recommendations recognizing that facility selection and design for a given road depends on many factors such as existing right of way, lane widths, budgetary constraints, etc. The B-Active Plan acknowledges that specific facility selection and design should be left to the judgement of the local design staff or consultant at the time of implementation.

As such, the B-Active Plan provides a menu of options based on the land use context a given segment falls within. These land use contexts are divided into Urban Core, Urban, Suburban, Rural, and Rural Town. In Chelsea, only the Suburban and Rural land use contexts apply.

Appendix C of the B-Active Plan provides a list of projects by jurisdiction and land use context, and Appendix D provides the menu of cross-sections by land use context and a list of detailed cost estimates. Visit the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham website at www.rpcgb.org or the project website at www.B-Activeplan.com to download the B-Active Plan and to learn more.
**Action TI 1.4**

Explore the feasibility of a walking and bicycling trail between the Foothills Point and Chesser Plantation Subdivisions.

So close, and yet so far: the Foothills Point and Chesser Plantation subdivisions are located a stone’s throw away from one another, yet one must drive over a mile to get from one to the other. The favorable location of these two subdivisions presents Chelsea with an excellent opportunity to establish its first link in the broader multimodal network. The location of the subdivisions in proximity to the Chesser Drive retail node and to the emerging Foothills Business Park creates an opportunity for a walking and bicycling trail that would serve recreational, commuter, shopping, and dining trips. Moreover, the short distance between the two neighborhoods, along with the presence of City-owned land in the Foothills Business Park through which the trail could be built, suggest the connection would be among the most cost-effective the City could build. The City should explore the feasibility of building this trail.

**Figure 6.3: Potential Foothills Walking Trail**

![Image credit: Alabama Media Group]
**Action TI 1.5**

Explore the feasibility of a walking and bicycling trail along Yellowleaf Creek.

See Action RGS 2.3.

**Action TI 1.6**

Enforce the City’s existing requirement to build sidewalks on all new subdivision streets.

Chelsea’s existing subdivision regulations already include several requirements that, if enforced, will dramatically improve the City’s walkability. Section 3.2 of the subdivision regulations provides the following requirements:

- Sidewalks must be provided on both sides of all streets in any new residential and commercial subdivisions of 4 lots or more,
- All cul-de-sacs in the R-1, R-2, PRD, and PMD zoning districts must provide a permanent pedestrian connection to adjacent streets, and
- Sidewalks must be provided at the time of any substantial enlargement or improvement to a subdivision.

Adherence to these sidewalk requirements is foundational to developing the walkable community that Chelsea residents envision. The Planning Commission and City Council should ensure that future developments abide by these standards.

**Action TI 1.7**

Provide bike racks at the recreation center, library, and all city schools.

While the addition of bicycle infrastructure and facilities are critical components of providing meaningful transportation choices, they must be supported by secure parking amenities at destinations to encourage ridership. It is recommended that the City of Chelsea install bike racks, lockers and other features at public buildings, so that bicyclists can expect a safe place to store their equipment whenever they make a trip.

30% of residents, when asked what additional recreational amenities they would like to see, preferred walking trails more than any other option – including playgrounds, parks, and ball fields.

- planChelsea Visioning Survey

**Jemison Park Trail**

Throughout the public involvement process, residents frequently cited the Jemison Park walking trail in Mountain Brook as an inspiration for a potential trail along Yellowleaf Creek in Chelsea. The trail is located on land that was deliberately preserved from development when the City of Mountain Brook was first developed. Today, the trail is used for walking, jogging, reading, picnics, and many other forms of recreation. In addition to this, paved and unpaved paths tie into the surrounding local sidewalk network, forming an integral link in the City’s active transportation infrastructure.
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 2
CREATE AN INTERCONNECTED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK.

Excellent connectivity is not only a prerequisite for a walkable community, it dramatically enhances the efficiency of vehicular traffic too. The predominant street pattern of long, winding streets with few intersections and many cul-de-sacs forces all traffic onto a few collector roads that become overburdened at rush hour. By contrast, a community with high street connectivity offers travelers a multitude of route choices for every trip, dispersing traffic through the system while also facilitating easier pedestrian and bicycle trips. The following actions describe how Chelsea can achieve a better interconnected system.

Action TI 2.1
Enforce existing connectivity and walkability requirements.

Chelsea’s existing subdivision regulations already include several requirements that, if enforced, will dramatically improve neighborhood connectivity and walkability. The Planning Commission and City Council have the ability to ensure that future developments abide by these standards. However, topographical and other constraints occasionally mean that satisfying these requirements becomes infeasible. In that case, the Planning Commission retains the flexibility to find creative alternatives to improving walkability and connectivity in the development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.1.4</td>
<td>All thoroughfares must provide for their continuation into adjacent developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.1.4.A</td>
<td>Dead ends shall be minimized in order to disperse local traffic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.1.4.B</td>
<td>Planning Commission can require sub streets to ensure opportunities to connect to adjacent developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.2.1.A</td>
<td>Sidewalks are required on both sides of all streets in all new subdivisions of 4 lots or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.2.1.C</td>
<td>All cul-de-sacs in the R-1, R-2, PRD, and PMD zoning districts must provide permanent pedestrian pathways within an easement to connect adjoining streets or sidewalks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.2.1.F</td>
<td>Sidewalks are required at the time of any substantial enlargement or improvement to the subdivision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Action TI 2.2**

Continue to explore the feasibility of a new connection along Chesser Drive through the Advanced Planning, Programming and Local Engineering (APPLE) Study.

In 2019, the City of Chelsea commissioned an Advanced Planning, Programming and Local Engineering (APPLE) Study to improve interconnectivity along the US 280 corridor through the grant program with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The goal of the study is to focus on the feasibility of extending Chesser Drive eastward along the north side of US 280 in order to connect to Old Highway 280, with the purpose of creating both a vehicular and pedestrian connection. This would allow residents and patrons to travel between the neighborhoods and businesses along the north side of the corridor without getting on to US 280. If constructed, this road would improve safety by providing local traffic an alternative and parallel route to US 280, while also improving operations along US 280 itself by removing local traffic from the highway. The City of Chelsea should continue to evaluate the feasibility of this potential connection, and ensure it also accommodates bicyclists and pedestrians.

**Action TI 2.3**

Establish a minimum connectivity index to increase neighborhood connectivity.

Without a quantifiable measure of connectivity, a local government can only subjectively evaluate whether a development proposal provides adequate walkability and circulation. A connectivity index is one such measure with proven success around the country. As an exceedingly practical tool, a connectivity index is simply the ratio of links (streets) to nodes (intersections and cul-de-sacs). The higher the ratio is, the more connected the neighborhood will be. A connectivity index provides a minimum degree of connectivity for residents to enjoy while allowing developers the flexibility to respond to site-specific topographical issues. Different minimum indices can be used for different zoning districts. For example, the City might require a minimum index of 1.3 for subdivisions in the PRD zoning district, a minimum of 1.2 in the R-2 zoning district, and none at all in the E-1 zoning district. The City would establish the minimum index for each zoning district according to its development goals for that district.

**Figure 6.4: Street Connectivity Index**

![Street Connectivity Index Diagram](Image credits: Google Maps)
**Action TI 2.4**

**Encourage the provision of street stubs for future external connections in place of cul-de-sacs.**

Like other young suburbs, Chelsea is largely composed of disjointed subdivisions that developed independently of one another without any means of connection between them. The lack of connections between neighborhoods further entrenches residents’ automobile dependency while also causing unnecessary congestion by forcing all traffic onto overloaded collector streets. The City can counter these effects by encouraging the provision of street stubs in place of cul-de-sacs at the edges of a development. Street stubs enable future developers of adjoining subdivisions to connect their street network to that of the existing subdivision. The resulting connectivity promotes walkability while also dispersing traffic circulation throughout the enlarged network, relieving congested bottlenecks. Residents often fear that external connections will substantially increase thru-traffic, but research has shown this seldom happens, and where it does, simple traffic calming measures will slow speeds and preserve pedestrian safety (see [Action TI 4.1](#)).

The City’s subdivision regulations already require developers to provide for future external connections (see [Action TI 2.1](#)); and the Planning Commission should ensure that proposed developments comply with this requirement. The City can also establish performance metrics for external connections, such as a minimum number of stub streets per 50 lots, etc., to provide objective evaluation criteria and ensure connectivity standards are responsive to development scale.

**Cary, NC Connectivity Ordinance**

Cary is a rapidly growing suburb of Raleigh, North Carolina that shares many characteristics with Chelsea. Decades of uncontrolled, automobile-oriented development patterns had led to miles of disconnected, disjointed neighborhoods that were not only unwalkable, but were also increasingly cost-inefficient to provide public services. In response, Cary incorporated a **connectivity ordinance** to its Land Development Ordinance in 1999 as a way of managing growth, improving motorized and non-motorized transportation, and fostering more efficient delivery of city services. Developed in consultation with residents, City staff, and local developers, the ordinance established a minimum connectivity index of 1.2 (i.e., 12 streets for every 10 intersections or cul-de-sacs in a neighborhood), as well as maximum spacings between connections to adjoining neighborhoods.

The Cary, NC connectivity ordinance can be found in Section 7.10 of its Land Development Ordinance here: [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/cary/latest/cary_nc/0-0-0-51597#rid-0-0-0-53416](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/cary/latest/cary_nc/0-0-0-51597#rid-0-0-0-53416)
**Figure 6.6: Street Connectivity and Traffic Implications**  
The level of connectivity in a neighborhood’s street network has direct implications not only on the ability of residents to walk to nearby locations, but also on the relative amount of traffic congestion. All three of these locations are in the Birmingham Metropolitan Area.

**Connected Grid System**  
This highly interconnected street network uses short block lengths and high intersection frequency to create multiple travel routes between two points for both pedestrians and motorists. Traffic congestion is low due to a wide range of alternative routes.

**Curvilinear Grid System**  
This moderately interconnected street network has longer blocks that might discourage walking, but sufficient cross-connections to permit a few alternative travel routes for pedestrians and motorists.

**Disconnected System**  
In this disconnected neighborhood, very long block lengths and lack of cross-connections not only eliminate the possibility of walking between two locations, but also force all vehicle trips onto the same routes, causing frequent congestion.

---

**Action TI 2.5**  
Establish maximum block sizes in new developments to foster better connectivity.

Establishing maximum block sizes is another effective tool for enhancing connectivity. A grid pattern of streets with smaller blocks makes it easier to travel from place to place within a neighborhood as opposed to long, curving dead end streets and cul-de-sacs. Large street blocks create long walking distances, discouraging travel by any mode but by automobile. Block sizes can be measured by their total perimeter or by their length between intersecting streets. Pedestrian-friendly block sizes seldom exceed 2000 feet in perimeter, or 1000 feet in lengths between two intersections. The City should consider establishing maximum block perimeters or lengths for different zoning districts in order to improve connectivity.

**Action TI 2.6**  
Consider adopting a Connectivity Ordinance.

A connectivity ordinance is a powerful tool to create safe, highly interconnected neighborhoods that provide choices for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. It works by quantifying connectivity with one or more performance metrics, and then requires new subdivisions to reach minimum connectivity thresholds for each metric. Typical metrics may include a connectivity index (see TI Action 2.3), external connections per number of proposed homes (TI Action 2.4), or maximum block size (TI Action 2.5). The ordinance can also specify conditions in which the requirements are waived, but should also ensure connectivity is provided by some other method (such as pedestrian access easements, as required in the subdivision regulations). Regardless of the methods involved, a successful connectivity ordinance must quantify its objectives so that developers, City staff, and residents will all understand them.
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 3
MAINTAIN EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE IN A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR.

Every inch of infrastructure that gets built is another inch that someone must pay to maintain. Nationally, cities’ budgets are buckling beneath the mounting weight of long-term infrastructure maintenance obligations. Chelsea is currently responsible for relatively little infrastructure – most utilities are contracted out and most of the traffic is carried on State and County Highways. This will change one day, however, and Chelsea must take measures today that will set it up for future solvency.

**Action TI 3.1**

Develop a formal strategy to regularly review and improve traffic signal timing as Chelsea grows.

At present, the City does not own any traffic signals; all signals within City limits are owned by ALDOT or Shelby County. However, the maintenance responsibility for these traffic signals has typically – and informally – fallen on the City. Chelsea does not currently have a formal traffic signal maintenance agreement with either ALDOT or Shelby County that clearly outlines the prerogatives and responsibilities of both parties for the upkeep and adjustment of signals. As Chelsea continues to grow, it will become increasingly important that the City has a formal strategy to maintain the signals in order to preserve safe and stable traffic flows. By establishing a formal traffic signal maintenance agreement with both ALDOT and Shelby County, the City can clarify its role in keeping signals operational in the event of weather damage or other failures, as well as its ability to periodically review and adjust signal timing to respond to changes in traffic patterns.
**Action TI 3.2**

Create a proactive street resurfacing program that emphasizes preventative maintenance.

Currently, the City maintains its streets with an ad hoc ("worst first") method for identifying and timing the maintenance and rehabilitation of its streets. While this is standard municipal practice, there are more effective methods of proactively managing the City’s maintenance needs in a way that will save the City money over time. One such method is a pavement management program.

A pavement management program creates a workable and affordable plan for improving the integrity of City streets over the long term through preventative maintenance, while reducing the costs of deferred maintenance. Preventative maintenance means applying the right treatment on the right street at the right time, regardless of whether that street is currently in the worst condition of all local roads. Because preventative maintenance is more cost effective than totally reconstructing a failed street, a pavement management program would save taxpayer dollars in the long run.

The program would utilize an industry-standard pavement rating system, such as Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) or Pavement Condition Index (PCI). It would keep an inventory of all local streets, and periodically evaluate the conditions of all pavements. Finally, it would use these conditions to set maintenance priorities and alternative treatments, rather than simply fixing the oldest or worst first.

**Figure 6.7: Reactive Maintenance vs. Pavement Preservation**

**Reactive Maintenance**

Pavement condition deteriorates on a parabolic curve. This means that at a certain age, pavement quality dramatically decreases, while the cost to repair it dramatically increases. In the long run, reactive maintenance will allow more roads to slip into failure, costing much more to rebuild.

**Preventative Maintenance**

Research has demonstrated that it’s far less expensive to maintain a good road than repair a failed one. Preventative maintenance focuses on extended the life of good roads by applying necessary repairs early and often, when they are much cheaper than full-scale reconstruction.

*Image credits: Harford County, MD*
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 4

 PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

Chelsea residents are painfully familiar with traffic congestion. The cardinal rule of transportation planning, however, is that a city cannot build its way out of congestion. Adding lanes only induces more traffic onto a road, and is prohibitively expensive at any rate. Moreover, most of the traffic in Chelsea is carried by State and County Highways that are out of the City’s ownership jurisdiction. The City must therefore get creative in devising ways of moving travelers through the community more efficiently and safely. Operational improvements that better utilize the existing system without adding capacity – or put another way, moving more people on fewer wheels over smaller distances – will be the key to limiting Chelsea’s traffic woes.

Action TI 4.1

Develop a traffic calming policy to reduce speeding in neighborhoods.

As Chelsea continues to grow, the City should take steps to protect neighborhood streets for neighborhood residents. One important step would be the establishment of a formal traffic calming policy. Traffic calming refers to the use of primarily physical measures to make streets safer by causing motorists to slow down. Measures can include roundabouts, median islands, speed tables, chicanes, and other design features that force drivers to drive more cautiously (see Callout Box on facing page for more information).

Every street is different, and appropriate traffic calming measures will differ accordingly. The City should consider adopting a formal traffic calming policy that enables citizens to petition for a traffic calming study in an orderly manner and can assist the City in the selection of appropriate interventions. Such a policy could include:

- Petition process by which residents or neighborhood associations request a study for traffic calming treatment installation or removal,
- Cost-sharing procedures between the City and the impacted neighborhood,
- Safety and operational warrant criteria, and
- Treatment alternatives.

The City of Sandy Springs, GA possesses a formal traffic calming policy that could be used as an example. The Sandy Springs policy can be found at: [http://www.sandyspringsga.gov/home/showdocument?id=379](http://www.sandyspringsga.gov/home/showdocument?id=379)

Figure 6.8: Motor Vehicle Speed and Pedestrian Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed (MPH)</th>
<th>Person survives the collision</th>
<th>Results in fatality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 MPH</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 MPH</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 MPH</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: San Francisco MTA Vision Zero Action Plan
TRAFFIC CALMING

The key to slowing traffic is street design, not speed limit signs. Motorists will drive as fast as a road’s design will allow. Inappropriately high speeds not only lead to more frequent and severe crashes for the motorists, they also endanger pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. City officials can utilize traffic calming to improve safety by reducing vehicle speeds. Traffic calming refers to a combination of primarily physical measures that reduce (i.e., “calm”) the negative effects of motor vehicle use. Restricting the speed and volume of traffic to acceptable levels helps reduce accidents, collisions, noise, vibration, pollution and crime.

Traffic calming measures include both intrusive and non-intrusive strategies. Intrusive strategies involve an alteration to the physical environment that constrain driver behavior, such as horizontal shifts (chicanes and median islands), vertical deflections (speed tables, speed bumps and raised intersections) and turn restrictions, which reduce cut-through traffic. Non-intrusive strategies involve administrative or operational improvements, such as traffic cameras, radar speed display signs and pavement re-striping.

Slowing traffic saves lives. Each 1-mph reduction in vehicle speed reduces collisions and fatalities by over 5%. A motorist traveling at 40 mph who sees a pedestrian 100 feet ahead will not be able to stop in time, colliding with the pedestrian at 38 mph. At this speed, the pedestrian is highly likely to suffer a serious injury or die. By contrast, a motorist traveling at 25 mph would have enough time to stop before collision.

Each traffic calming measure is better suited to some street types than others. The City should work with traffic engineers to evaluate its streets where residents have expressed safety concerns, and determine whether and what traffic calming measures are warranted.

Table 6.5: Performance of Selected Traffic Calming Treatments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Average Speed Reduction</th>
<th>Cost Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed Table</td>
<td>7 - 9 mph</td>
<td>$5,000 - $15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Bump</td>
<td>5 - 8 mph</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicanes (set of three)</td>
<td>3 - 9 mph</td>
<td>$10,000 - $16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised Median Island</td>
<td>4 mph</td>
<td>$6,000 - $9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Refuge Island</td>
<td>4 mph</td>
<td>$10,000 - $30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Circle</td>
<td>4 - 7 mph</td>
<td>$3,000 - $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choker</td>
<td>1 - 4 mph</td>
<td>$5,000 - $20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image credit: Seattle Streets Illustrated

Image credit: Twitter

Image credit: WBAY

Image credit: Pinterest
Action TI 4.2

Work with ALDOT to reduce the speed limit on U.S. 280 through Chelsea from 65 mph.

Throughout the public involvement process of this Plan, many residents expressed concern regarding the prevailing speeds on U.S. 280 through Chelsea. The current speed limit on U.S. 280 east of Publix is 65 mph, which is standard on a rural 4-lane divided highway. This speed limit, however, is increasingly unsafe for the rapidly growing commercial corridor along U.S. 280 where businesses, driveways, traffic signals are beginning to proliferate. Growing local traffic volumes correspond to more frequent turning movements, posing significant danger to local traffic and thru-traffic alike.

ALDOT sets speed limits on its highways, including U.S. 280, according to its 2015 Speed Management Manual. The manual outlines a process for local governments to request a speed study to evaluate potential speed limit reductions where appropriate. The City should consider requesting a speed study for U.S. 280 through Chelsea City limits.

Action TI 4.3

Identify potential hazard mitigation strategies at dangerous intersections and road locations.

Throughout the public involvement process of this Plan, residents expressed concern about backups and safety concerns at the following locations:

- Post office frontage road
- County Highway 39 at the intersection with County Highway 47
- County Highway 39 at the intersection with County Highway 69

The City should evaluate these locations for potential safety hazards and/or operational inefficiencies. If any significant issues are discovered, the City should consider a feasibility study through the RPCGB’s APPLE program for more detailed analysis and possible countermeasures, including eliminating obstacles to vision, constructing turn lanes, installing improved signage and striping, adding lighting, or providing traffic signals.

Action TI 4.4

Create a park-and-ride lot for commuters to promote transportation demand management (TDM).

Almost every commuter in the Birmingham region drives to work alone, with four empty seats in the car. Building enough road capacity to keep all traffic flowing at all times is impossible. Instead, the City of Chelsea should actively promote transportation demand management (TDM), which is the broad and growing field of incentive-based practices to encourage more efficient use of the existing transportation system. TDM shifts commuters away from driving alone and toward modes with higher person-capacity, such as carpooling. It also encourages a shift in travel time away from peak periods and toward less congested times. An effective TDM program will enable the City and local stakeholders to meet existing and rising travel demands by better utilizing existing networks and services while retaining Chelsea’s high quality of life.

One practical method to encourage TDM is to create a park-and-ride lot for commuters. This could be done in one of two ways. The City could partner with a local business, shopping center or non-profit organization to designate a certain number of spaces in an existing parking lot on weekdays for carpoolers, designate spaces at City Hall, or build a new park-and-ride lot of its own. Every occupied seat in a carpool is an entire vehicle no longer taking up space on a highway. However it is created, a park-and-ride lot would be an important step toward improving traffic along the region’s congested corridors.
Did you know you can get paid to commute to work? If you get to work by any means other than driving by yourself, you can!

People like options. When it comes to getting to work, having options that reward you is even better! The demand for attractive commuting alternatives to driving alone continues to grow significantly. CommuteSmart is a federally-funded initiative of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham that formed in 1999 to promote alternative commuting options for the Birmingham area.

CommuteSmart partners with organizations throughout the Birmingham region to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by encouraging workers to use alternative commuting options. These options include walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus and even working from home. The program is designed to work with commuters and employers to make changing commute to work habits less intimidating. It offers incentives and services to help ease your transition from driving alone to a cleaner commute. By signing up with CommuteSmart, you could earn $1 per day (up to $70) in the first 90 days for getting to and from work (or class) in any way other than driving alone. After that, participants can earn a $25 gift card for continuing to take alternative commutes at least 20 times each quarter afterwards.

Through CommuteSmart, you can reduce traffic, improve air quality, and strengthen our community. Visit www.commutesmart.org to learn more.
**Action TI 4.5**

Enforce access management standards to preserve traffic flow and reduce accidents.

All properties require access to a road through a driveway. Each driveway, however, creates a potential conflict point where vehicle paths cross, merge, or weave. High concentrations of driveways along a road lead to high numbers of conflict points, which cause safety hazards and slow down traffic unnecessarily. Managing access – i.e., reducing the frequency of conflict points along a stretch of road – not only improves safety for motorists and pedestrians, it also improves the capacity of the road by preserving steady traffic flow.

Chelsea currently has robust access management standards in Article II of its Design and Construction Specifications. They include standards for the frequency of access points along designated roads, while also providing mechanisms for alternative access for property owners, such as shared or consolidated driveways, cross-access between adjoining properties, frontage roads and backage roads, etc. The City should continue to enforce these standards to preserve the safety and efficiency of its transportation network. The City should also strongly encourage ALDOT to adhere to their own adopted standards on U.S. 280, and not grant unwarranted variances.

Access management is among the more cost-effective countermeasures to sprawl-induced traffic congestion and safety hazards, but only if implemented proactively. Attempting to retroactively manage access along fully-developed corridors is both costly and unpopular, as it eliminates access points that property owners feel entitled to. A growing community like Chelsea can get ahead of this problem by adopting standards for future growth along highways within its limits.
ACCESS MANAGEMENT

By consolidating the number of intersections along a road, access management dramatically reduces the number of potential crash locations, all the while improving traffic flow and aesthetics. In this example, consolidating driveways and adding a median reduced 30 conflict points to only 3 — a 90% reduction.

Figure 6.9: Access Management Safety Improvements
**Action TI 4.6**

Work with the Shelby County to install a left-turn lane at Chelsea Middle School on County Highway 39.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, citizens expressed concern over traffic congestion along County Highway 39 at Chelsea Middle School. The absence of a left-turn lane on the highway for vehicles turning into the school causes severe backups in the southbound lane during drop-off and pick-up hours. The City should work with Shelby County to evaluate the warrant and feasibility of a left-turn lane to alleviate congestion at this bottleneck.

**Action TI 4.7**

Improve connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods to disperse traffic flow.

Conventional subdivisions, developed in isolation from one another with few (if any) connections between them, artificially inflate traffic congestion. By forcing all trips to use the same entrance, they accordingly force all traffic onto the same collector road, which at rush hour can be overwhelmed. Moreover, poor connectivity hampers emergency response times by forcing vehicles to take often circuitous routes to reach a destination. The City should instead use its subdivision regulations to insist that new subdivisions connect to adjacent neighborhoods where possible, and make provisions for further connections to future adjacent developments (see **TI Actions 2.1 – 2.4**). The resulting routing redundancy will disperse traffic more evenly through the system, allowing Chelsea's roads to function better even at rush hour.

**Action TI 4.8**

Anually update a Local Transportation Plan to receive Rebuild Alabama Act funds.

The 2019 Rebuild Alabama Act levied an additional 10-cent gas tax to help fund local road projects and clear the backlog of state highway projects. Every municipality in Alabama is eligible for a portion of the proceeds of this new levy, the portion varying with the size of the municipality. In order to receive the funds, each municipality must provide a “Local Transportation Plan” that identifies the projects for which the city will spend its allocated funding. The City of Chelsea should therefore ensure that it maintains a local transportation plan and annually updates it with current priority road projects.

**Action TI 4.9**

Maintain a list of shovel-ready projects eligible for ATRIP-II and Rebuild Alabama Act Grant funds.

The Rebuild Alabama Act has made new funds available for local transportation projects through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II) and Rebuild Alabama Act Grant programs (see Callout Box: Rebuild Alabama Act on the facing page). In order to best position itself to receive funds from these competitive grant programs, the City should maintain a list of shovel-ready projects – new construction, maintenance, or otherwise – for which the City can defend the purpose, need, scope, and cost of each project.
For decades, Alabama’s ability to maintain its transportation infrastructure has been declining. While maintenance and construction costs have dramatically risen, the state’s primary source of revenue – the gas tax – has steadily dwindled beneath the dual pressures of inflation and improving vehicle fuel efficiency (meaning cars need less gas to drive more miles). To address the growing annual shortfalls, Governor Kay Ivey in March 2019 signed into law the Rebuild Alabama Act. This law incrementally raises the state gas tax from its current rate of 18 cents per gallon to 28 cents per gallon by 2022. With the expectation to generate around $300 million annually, these new revenues will help the state, county, and local governments begin to clear the long backlog of deferred infrastructure maintenance.

Since most traffic occurs on State-owned roads (Interstate, Federal, and State highways), ALDOT will receive two-thirds of the proceeds from the new gas tax. However, the law also establishes three new methods of dispersing this revenue to individual municipalities such as Chelsea for the upkeep of their own infrastructure:

- **Annual Allocation** – Under the law, every municipality in Alabama will receive an annual share of the gas tax proceeds in proportion to their population and the mileage of roads within their corporate limits. Chelsea’s share was approximately $50,000 in Fiscal Year 2020 and is expected to increase to $80,000 by Fiscal Year 2022. In order to receive its allocation, however, Chelsea must adopt a Local Transportation Plan before the beginning of each Fiscal Year that specifies how it will use the revenues. More information about annual allocations and associated requirements can be found at https://www.alabamacounties.org/rebuildal/.

- **ATRIP-II** – The Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II) is an ALDOT-administered grant program that will fund projects of local interest on state-maintained roads. In Chelsea’s case, this would apply to U.S. 280 within city limits. Funds for the grant program will come from the state’s own share of the gas tax revenues, and will amount to at least $30 million each year. More information on how Chelsea can apply for ATRIP-II funds can be found at https://www.dot.state.al.us/atrip2/.

- **RAA Annual Grant Program** – Similar to the ATRIP-II program, the Rebuild Alabama Act (RAA) Annual Grant Program is an ALDOT-administered grant program for projects of local interest. Unlike ATRIP-II, however, these funds are not restricted to state-owned roads, but can be used on any functionally classified road in a city. Funds for the grant program will come from the state’s own share of the gas tax revenues, and will amount to at least $10 million each year. More information on how Chelsea can apply for RAA Annual Grant funds can be found at https://www.dot.state.al.us/RArebuildal/.
chapter seven

Public Services

“The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world.”

- G. K. Chesterton
Goal 1: Utilize municipal codes to encourage great places.

Goal 2: Develop strategies and programs to improve code enforcement and property maintenance.

Goal 3: Enhance public services throughout the community.

Goal 4: Develop a coherent annexation strategy.

Goal 5: Preserve the safety of the community.
PUBLIC SERVICES

Chelsea residents are extremely satisfied with life in Chelsea. They have access to excellent schools, robust recreational programs, abundant green space, and a growing number of shopping and dining options. Areas were identified for improvement, however. Lack of placemaking and visual identity, code violations and litter, and limited services for different age groups concerned many residents, while ad hoc annexation patterns and overstretched emergency services cause administrative headaches for City employees. This chapter outlines various strategies to improve the delivery of public services for all citizens.

96% of residents rated their quality of life in Chelsea as either “good” or “excellent.”

- planChelsea Visioning Survey
PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 1

UTILIZE MUNICIPAL CODES TO ENCOURAGE GREAT PLACES.

Chelsea residents want their community to be unique, full of memorable and lovely places that exemplify Chelsea’s character and bind its residents together in a common identity. In other words, they want excellent placemaking. Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which a community can shape the public realm in order to maximize shared value and strengthen the connection between people and the places they live. Our world is best experienced on our own two feet, which means placemaking involves building our communities to the human scale. The following goals and actions will detail how Chelsea can encourage the provision of great places in even the most mundane locations.

Action PS 1.1

Improve the pedestrian environment and community character by locating parking lots to the rear or sides of commercial buildings.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, several residents expressed concern that future commercial development would include unsightly expanses of empty parking lots in front of strip malls. While expansive parking lots in the front of commercial buildings can be convenient to patrons, they sharply discourage walking and tend to detract from the community’s character — especially if and when the buildings become vacant. The City can mitigate these unfortunate consequences by requiring or encouraging parking lots on commercial properties to be located to the rear or side of the building. This brings buildings closer to the road, improving the character of the corridor and creating a more pleasant environment for pedestrians. The City should consider revising its Municipal Design Standards to require parking lot location to the rear or side of buildings, or limit parking lots in the front to no more than a single aisle.

Figure 7.1: Parking Lot Location and the Public Realm

Image credit: Wilmington, NC

What Citizens Said

- Concern over poor code enforcement and litter
- Concern over uneven development aesthetics, especially along highways
- Concern over tacky signs and billboards
- Little awareness of Citizens Observer Patrol (COP)
- Need incentives for better placemaking and walkable development
- COP requires updated equipment and younger volunteers
- Library and Community Center need additional space for new programs
- Need long-term annexation strategy
Streamline the approval process for preferred development patterns.

If a proposed development will help implement the community’s vision for walkable, vibrant neighborhoods, then it should receive expedited approval. Approval processes can be lengthy, unclear, and unpredictable; the resulting delays and uncertainty cost money, which either stall projects altogether, or pass on costs to the end user. Expedited planning and approval processes can reduce costs for the developer, making compact, walkable developments more feasible and affordable.

Chelsea can fast-track approvals for walkable development in various ways, such as:

- A commitment to approve proposals that meet the community’s priority needs through a quick scorecard evaluation,
- Enact specific time limits for reviews and approvals to introduce certainty, and
- Establish a one-stop-shop for applications.

Tie development incentives to placemaking and pedestrian-friendly design.

Chelsea residents consistently voiced a desire for improved placemaking and walkability. Local developers are eager to satisfy this demand, but cited regulatory and financial barriers to developing such places. The City can encourage development that advances the community’s goal of vibrant, walkable places with regulatory flexibility and targeted incentives. The Chelsea Zoning Ordinance currently outlines a few “incentives” for planned development districts (e.g. PRD or PMD), but these are not expressly tied to any defined standards.

The City can more effectively shape development patterns in the interest of its citizens by linking incentives to the achievement of certain design goals. For example, developments that achieve a minimum connectivity index of 1.2 could be made eligible for fast-track approval (see Action TI 2.3, “Connectivity Ordinance”). A list of potential community goals with corresponding metrics and potential incentives with which to link them is provided below in Table 7.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Goals</th>
<th>Example Development Metrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walkability</td>
<td>Exceeds connectivity index of 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sidewalks placed on both sides of streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum block perimeter of 1400 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placemaking</td>
<td>Minimum 50% of dwelling units have parking accessed by rear alley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum streetlight height of 18 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Is in a Preferred Growth Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporates minimum 4 different types of dwelling units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Incentives

- Density bonuses
- Waived application or permit fees
- Fast-track permitting
- Guaranteed decision timeframe
- Sales tax rebates
- Reduced off-street parking requirements
### Action PS 1.4

**Work with property owners to beautify building facades along highly visible corridors.**

During the public involvement process of this Plan, residents and business owners frequently complained about the unsightly appearance of building facades along U.S 280 and the various County Highways in Chelsea. Local business leaders voiced their support for enhanced aesthetic standards on building facades, but worried that they would be unable to comply without financial assistance. The City should consider establishing tools, such as a façade improvement program, to assist local business owners in bringing up the appearance of their buildings to the community’s standards. The visual character of routine development communicates a powerful message about a community, and the City can play an active role in crafting that message.

### Action PS 1.5

**Clearly define key gateways into Chelsea through signage and landscaping enhancements.**

Gateways are critical tools for communicating a city’s identity to both travelers and residents. Chelsea should establish attractive, green and welcoming gateways at major entry points into the City through a combination of plantings, landscaping and signage elements. Because all of Chelsea’s gateways are located along State and County Highways, they should work closely with ALDOT and the Shelby County Highway Department to ensure no signs or landscaped elements are placed within the roadside clear zone, or otherwise pose any safety hazard.

Since much of the City of Chelsea borders unincorporated land, it is likely that the City’s municipal limits will expand as it annexes parts of this land in the future. It is therefore important that the City identify future gateway locations in coordination with its long-term annexation plan (see Action PS 4.1).

### Action PS 1.6

**Set up a Zoning Board of Adjustments to handle special zoning cases.**

Section 11-52-80 of the Code of Alabama permits cities to establish a Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA). A ZBA is a quasi-judicial, independent board empowered to grant relief from the strict application of zoning regulations on a particular property (variances), approve certain uses of land (special exceptions), and hear appeals of actions taken by an administrative officer. These decisions are quasi-judicial in nature – that is, they interpret and adjudicate decisions that have already been made. However, because Chelsea lacks a ZBA, such decisions are currently being made by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is more properly a legislative body – that is, it is designed to make decisions, not interpret them. Moreover, the Planning Commission is often very busy, which keeps it from ZBA-related cases with the degree of nuance and detail needed. The City should instead establish a formal ZBA with members recommended by the Planning Commission and approved by the Council.
PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 2
DEVELOP STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE CODE ENFORCEMENT AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE.

Chelsea residents take pride in their community. Nevertheless, some property owners and visitors, whether through ignorance or lack of concern, violate local codes that keep the community clean and presentable. The answer to such violations is seldom another ordinance. Instead, residents should take responsibility for helping their neighbors keep Chelsea beautiful. The City can implement the following actions to empower its citizens to do just that.

Action PS 2.1
Create a citizen’s guide for code enforcement that educates citizens on common code enforcement issues.

A code enforcement guide would help increase the City’s capacity to identify and track blighted properties by streamlining the public reporting process. Through the code enforcement guide, residents would be able to report various issues related to property maintenance and other health and safety violations. To improve the accessibility and efficiency of both the guide and reporting process, a mobile app, in addition to a hard copy of the guide, should be created. The mobile app would allow residents to take photos of the issues they want to report, tag them with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping integration, add notes to the report and send it out to the appropriate parties. This would provide code enforcement officers with real time data – thus enabling them to better track violations in the community and provide prompt feedback to residents concerning the status of their reports.

Two models to reference are the “Citizen’s Code Enforcement Guide” from Manatee County, Florida and “Access Cupertino” from the City of Cupertino, California. Common code violations in the City of Chelsea include:

- Weed and debris
- Inoperable vehicles in driveways
- Parking in front yards

Action PS 2.2
Work with faith-based and other non-governmental partners to assist elderly and disabled residents with maintaining their property.

A key feature of any healthy community is the ability of senior residents, the disabled, and other special-needs populations to access the necessary resources and assistance to maintain their homes and age in place. Current trends suggest that Chelsea will increasingly face this issue in the coming years. Its share of citizens age 55 and older is steadily growing, while the overall homeownership rate remains one of the highest in the region, at over 93% (see Appendix B Existing Conditions, pp.4-7). This means Chelsea will have a significant population of residents who have some level of difficulty in maintaining their homes and properties.

Thanks to the considerable array of faith-based organizations located in and around Chelsea, the City can draw upon many potential partners to help them address this issue. The City should connect its senior and disabled citizens with these local organizations to help them complete simple home repairs, install grab-bars in bathrooms, organize rooms, change smoke detector batteries, and other tasks that will enable seniors to live safely in their homes. The City could convene local faith-based organizations to initiate their cooperation, and then advertise the availability of their services to seniors on the City’s website, social media, and other messaging platforms.
**Action PS 2.3**

Adopt the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code.

The City should adopt the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), in whole or in part, to ensure that residential and commercial properties are safe, upheld to modern standards and to protect Chelsea’s growth and prosperity. The IPMC outlines property maintenance regulations including weed and debris, vegetation maintenance, junk vehicles, water pollution, public decency, driver sight obstructions, dilapidated properties and more.

Adopting the IPMC would raise the minimum standard of what is acceptable for building and living conditions and would provide a greater opportunity to address issues at an earlier stage before they compound. The code provides an enforcement mechanism that applies to existing structures – both residential and commercial properties and enables the City to impose fines on the owner rather than impose liens upon the dilapidated property.


**Action PS 2.4**

Hold educational sessions with the City Staff, Planning Commission, City Council and developers to better understand the Highway 280 Corridor Overlay District.

In 2019, the City adopted the Highway 280 Corridor Overlay District to create a more uniform and aesthetically-pleasing appearance along the U.S. 280 and Old Highway 280 corridors and help prevent the undesirable consequences of poorly-managed growth and design decisions. This was an important step toward improving the character of Chelsea, but its successful implementation will depend upon securing the buy-in of City staff and private developers for new development and major redevelopment along the corridors. The City should ensure that future staff and members of the Planning Commission understand the importance of the Overlay District, and how to apply the standards and design guidelines it contains.

**Action PS 2.5**

Continue to promote the “Keep Chelsea Beautiful” campaign to reduce litter.

During the public involvement process of this Plan, citizens expressed concern over the accumulation of litter along roads and in parks throughout the community. The City currently hosts an annual community clean-up day in partnership with local faith-based organizations, in which teams of volunteers clean up litter at various locations around the City. Chelsea should continue to promote this event with its “Keep Chelsea Beautiful” campaign. In addition to mobilizing volunteers on designated clean-up days, the campaign should regularly advertise the illegal dumping reporting form on its website through the City’s social media platforms. Alabama People Against a Littered State (APALS) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to providing and implementing anti-litter programs for all Alabama counties, cities, communities, schools and other groups striving to enhance their environmental and economic impact through a litter free, cleaner and more beautiful environment. The City of Chelsea could partner with APALS to enhance their own municipal litter program.
PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 3
ENHANCE PUBLIC SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

During the public involvement process, Chelsea residents identified a variety of community events and services that they would like to see improved or expanded. The following actions detail how the City can address some of these issues.

**Action PS 3.1**

Encourage regular community events such as music festivals, art festivals, and “movies in the park”.

The Big Kaboom, Fire in the Foothills and the farmer’s market are very popular events among Chelsea residents. Some, however, expressed a desire for more frequent and regular community events to provide a greater variety of entertainment options for Chelsea’s many young families. Music festivals, art festivals, and “movies in the park” series (like those hosted by Alabaster) provide fun and inexpensive opportunities for families to gather and get to know their fellow residents. As the City incrementally builds out its town center, it should utilize its public spaces and the adjoining Chelsea Community Park to host these events.

**Action PS 3.2**

Expand the library to provide more space for both children and adult programs.

Chelsea residents repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the local library throughout the public involvement process of this Plan. In order to continue serving Chelsea residents well, however, the library will require additional space and amenities to accommodate the City’s growing and diversifying needs. City staff outlined the following strategic investments that are needed:

- Additional floor space for an expanded catalog and children’s programs
- Upgraded desktop computers
- Expanded patio space
- Construction of a small theater venue for conferences as well as youth and community theater

If possible, these investments should occur at the existing library, without construction of satellite branches that would require additional staffing and maintenance obligations.

Image credit: City of Chelsea
PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 4
DEVELOP A COHERENT ANNEXATION STRATEGY.

During the public involvement process, several citizens expressed concern over the administrative problems caused by Chelsea's patchy city limits, as well as the potential for improved cooperation with neighboring communities. The following actions detail how the City can address some of these issues.

**Action PS 4.1**
Establish a long-range annexation plan for the City.

Like most Alabama cities, Chelsea has expanded its municipal limits by piecemeal annexation of individual properties. While this is a valid and simple annexation method, it has yielded a patchwork quilt of incorporated and unincorporated areas that hinders good planning and well-ordered development. The City of Chelsea should instead develop a long-range annexation plan to guide future annexation decisions in a coherent manner.

An annexation plan would accomplish several important goals. First, it would outline a strategy to create a rational municipal boundary without confusing "donut holes" of unincorporated areas surrounded by incorporated land, simplifying boundaries and reducing administrative confusion. Second, it would enable the City to provide services to its citizens more consistently and efficiently. Finally, it would enable the City to ensure quality development with a consistent community character, while also protecting sensitive land from intensive development.

An effective plan would explain the rationale for its annexation strategy, articulate the specific city objectives that would be accomplished by annexation, and show why these objectives support the Comprehensive Plan. The plan would then identify specific areas for eventual annexation based on objective criteria, and explain why each area ought to be incorporated. The plan should include a fiscal impact analysis of annexing the proposed areas, demonstrating how expected tax revenues from these properties will compare to the cost of providing them with local services. Finally, the plan would select an appropriate method of annexation for each area in accordance with State law.

Figure 7.2: Selected Corporate Limits Footprints Compared

Chelsea's corporate limits have significantly more gaps than many of its neighbors, causing potential administrative headaches and preventing the establishment of a more uniform community character.
Action PS 4.2

Coordinate annexation and development plans with utility and community service providers to ensure adequate provision of services.

As Chelsea continues to grow, future annexation and development plans should be evaluated with the input of utility and community service providers, including police and fire protection, water, sewer, and County and State transportation officials. Land development decisions must be carefully coordinated with the public sector’s ability to provide infrastructure, facilities, and services in an orderly manner. Intensive development in outlying areas that require substantial capital and maintenance investments for public infrastructure should be discouraged, and should instead be directed toward areas with adequate existing coverage (see Action FLU 2.1, “Preferred Growth Areas.”).

Action PS 4.3

Coordinate and cooperate with neighboring entities and service providers in addressing issues whose impacts extend beyond Chelsea’s borders.

Chelsea will not grow in a vacuum. Its neighboring cities, Pelham and Westover, are growing steadily, as is unincorporated Shelby County that surrounds Chelsea’s patchwork of municipal boundaries. Moreover, utility providers as well as the Shelby County and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) are responsible for extensive infrastructure crossing through Chelsea. To fulfill its obligations as a considerate neighbor, the City should strengthen its relationships with surrounding public entities and ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

- **Transportation** – Coordinate Chelsea’s capital improvement program with neighboring and regional infrastructure priorities, including any transportation projects identified in the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and any projects planned by neighboring communities.

- **Infrastructure** – Ensure land use decisions can be supported by existing and planned infrastructure capacity, including water, wastewater, telecommunications, and EMS.

- **Green Systems** – Align local green infrastructure plans with those of neighboring municipalities, including walking trails, greenways, linear parks, and stormwater management strategies.

- **Shared Resources** – Identify potential services that could be enhanced through cost-sharing agreements.
PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 5
PRESERVE THE SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY.

Chelsea residents are highly satisfied with public safety. As the City continues to grow, it should ensure its ability to protect its citizens remains strong.

Action PS 5.1
Plan a fourth fire station to improve response times in the underserved areas of Chelsea.

National data suggest that houses are burning faster due to the use of more flammable construction and furniture materials; houses that once burned down in six to eight minutes are now burning down in only three to four. While the addition of a new fire station on County Highway 51 will dramatically reduce response times in the eastern neighborhoods of Chelsea, there are many other areas of the community still outside the crucial eight-minute threshold. As the City grows, it should evaluate a future fire station site to better serve these areas.

Figure 7.3: Gaps in Fire Emergency Response Times

Feeling the Heat
57% of Chelsea properties are located outside a four-minute fire truck response time.

10% of Chelsea properties are located outside an eight-minute fire truck response time.
**Action PS 5.2**

Ensure that the Chelsea Fire & Rescue Department coordinates with water service providers in the siting of future stations.

Fire stations can only operate effectively when served by adequate water pressure. As the Chelsea Fire & Rescue Department evaluates potential sites for new stations to cover the growing community, it should coordinate with water service providers in the area to ensure any such location will be served by sufficient water pressure for the needs of fire trucks.

**Action PS 5.3**

Ensure that the Chelsea Fire & Rescue Department possesses sufficient staff to respond to emergencies effectively.

Chelsea Fire & Rescue currently operates on a very limited budget, and its coverage responsibilities continue to grow as the city limits expand, further stretching its resources. Currently, there is no full-time fire marshal. Fire engines are currently operating with only two firemen per truck, when at least three are necessary, and four are preferable. In order to ensure that Chelsea Fire & Rescue can effectively respond to emergencies, the City should allocate the resources necessary for them to recruit new full-time volunteers or staff.

**Action PS 5.4**

Continue to invest in the Citizens Observer Patrol (COP).

The Chelsea Citizens Observer Patrol (COP) is an organization of trained volunteers who patrol neighborhoods and businesses to help deter crime and to assist in emergencies. During the public involvement process of this Plan, City staff outlined several investments necessary to maintain COP’s long-term effectiveness:

- Recruitment and training of younger volunteers – the average volunteer is 72 years old
- Replacement of aging equipment, especially vehicles
- Provision of tablets in vehicles
- Provision of tactical shirts
- Establishment of a paid staff or director
- Improved outreach, including a new neighbor welcome program

**Action PS 5.5**

Evaluate development regulations to identify ways that the principals of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be incorporated into the design of newly-developed and redeveloped areas.

Research has shown that decisions preceding criminal acts are highly influenced by the perceived risk of being caught. CPTED guidelines help to deter criminal acts through natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial reinforcement and maintenance. These CPTED guidelines should be applied to parks, open spaces and the design of other public facilities. The primary strategies of CPTED are:

- **Natural Surveillance:** “See and be seen” is the goal of natural surveillance. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone will see them do it. Lighting and landscape play an important role.
- **Natural Access Control:** Walkways, fences, lighting, signage and landscape can clearly guide people and vehicles to and from the proper entrances. The goal is not necessarily to keep intruders out, but to direct the flow of people while decreasing the opportunity for crime.
- **Territorial Reinforcement:** Creating or extending a “sphere of influence” by utilizing physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping and signage that enable users of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship over it, is the goal of Territorial Reinforcement. Public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones. Potential trespassers perceive this control and are thereby discouraged.
- **Maintenance:** The “Broken Window Theory” suggests that one “broken window” or nuisance, if allowed to exist, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties are breeding grounds for criminal activity.
The Chelsea Comprehensive Plan

Image credit: Pitts Media
“The truth about a city’s aspirations isn’t found in its vision. It’s found in its budget.”

- Brent Toderian
The adoption of this Chelsea Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the implementation process. It is the product of considerable efforts on the part of the City of Chelsea and many other community leaders and concerned citizens. Working with a range of potential implementation partners, the Mayor’s Office, City Council, and staff within the various municipal departments should be the lead facilitators to implement the Plan. This Plan should be revisited and updated over the coming years to ensure that its goals and recommend actions still meet the desires of the community, and to ensure that there is adequate political support for these ongoing planning efforts. Continued community discussion and cooperation will be necessary.

It is important to note that the contents of this Comprehensive Plan are designed to serve as a guide for growth and development, in both the public and private sectors, and as such are not binding upon the City of Chelsea when making specific land use decisions and public investments. This Comprehensive Plan is not a law or a zoning ordinance and is instead intended to serve as a policy guide for community decision-making regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements decisions.
Implementation Matrix Table
To guide the implementation of this Plan, the following matrix and summary tables have been created. The tables highlight the list of recommended action items, their relevant page numbers in the Plan, a suggested time frame for completion of each item, as well as potential partners who can be charged with leading the implementation efforts.

The suggested time frames for implementation may vary based on economic influences, potential funding sources and other factors, but they are defined as:

- **Short-term**: tasks that could be initiated and/or implemented within 1-5 years of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan,
- **Long-term**: tasks that are on a 6 year or greater time frame after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **On-going**: tasks that may be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving numerous partners, or tasks that are ongoing, continuous efforts.

Implementation Partners
Since the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be implemented over several years, during which administrations, departments, boards and commissions may change, it is important to identify which partners should take the lead and be in a supporting role for a particular action task. It is important to note that the policies and recommended actions outlined in the matrices are for consideration only, and do not constitute an obligation on any City department, agency or organization's part to lead, support or participate in any given activity. The implementation matrices simply identify the recommended actions and potential partners in furthering the plan's goals and actions.
# Table 8.1: Implementation Matrix

## Chapter 3 – Future Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Potential Lead Partner(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #1: Plan for a vibrant town center in the heart of Chelsea.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assemble a team of committed individuals to steer the development of a new town center.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk, Main Street Alabama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Modify the Zoning Ordinance to create a mixed-use zoning district.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, planning consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Establish a town center development authority to facilitate investment by reducing risk and exposure.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Complete the realignment of County Roads 47 and 39.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Shelby County Highway Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Develop a master plan for a walkable town center.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, planning consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #2: Encourage sustainable long-term development patterns.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage walkable, traditional neighborhood patterns.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance to encourage compact and pedestrian-friendly new development.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Planning Commission, planning consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Direct future growth toward Preferred Growth Areas.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning Commission, Shelby County Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage a diverse economy by providing suitable land for commercial and light industrial investment.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Target pedestrian-friendly commercial development at the intersection of County Roads 11 and 36.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, City Engineer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 3 – Future Land Use

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Potential Lead Partner(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #3: Link land use and transportation.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage walkable, mixed-use developments that integrate</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, City Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>different uses and reduce motor vehicle trips.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ensure future developments</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, City Engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improve pedestrian, bicyclist,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and vehicular connectivity both within and without.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Direct commercial expansion</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>to compact nodes clustered at major intersections instead of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>conventional highway strips.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #4: Encourage a wide range of housing types.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage additional housing types such as estates, live-work units,</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lofts, condos, and townhomes in new subdivisions and PUDs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Encourage traditional neighborhood developments that offer a variety</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of housing choices.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Encourage the development of viable senior housing options.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Goal #5: Preserve natural open space and expand recreational</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>opportunities for residents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage the development of conservation subdivisions to</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, Shelby County Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>protect rural areas.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Add development standards for conservation subdivision to the</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subdivision regulations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protect sites of historic significance as the City grows.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage the development of new neighborhood-scale parks in</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>underserved residential areas and in new residential developments.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encourage development that respects natural topography and resources.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning Commission, City Engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Protect sensitive water resources by observing a minimum riparian</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning Commission, City Engineer</td>
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<td>buffer.</td>
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## Chapter 4 – Economic Development

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<th>Potential Lead Partner(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continue to promote the “Love Chelsea” campaign.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expand the reach and role of the Chelsea Business Alliance.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Utilize the public realm as an economic development asset.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage infill projects within existing strip commercial and “big box” commercial development sites to combat suburban sprawl and to create more compact walkable developments.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal #1: Invest in branding and public realm improvements that make Chelsea a unique place to work, shop, dine, and play.

### Goal #2: Market and recruit businesses that will diversify and complement existing businesses.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continue to partner with 58 INC., the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, and the Chelsea Business Alliance to identify and address business needs within Chelsea.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>58 INC., Mayor and City Council, Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Recruit additional sit-down and high-end restaurants.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>58 INC., Mayor and City Council, Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recruit additional family-friendly entertainment options to the city.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>58 INC., Mayor and City Council, Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Recruit a full-service hotel to locate within Chelsea.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>58 INC., Mayor and City Council, Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Recruit additional outpatient and urgent care providers.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>58 INC., Mayor and City Council, Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Chapter 4 – Economic Development

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<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Potential Lead Partner(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #3: Provide the physical capacity for economic development.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continue to develop the Foothills Business Park to recruit medical technology companies to Chelsea.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>58 INC., Mayor and City Council, Chelsea Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Continue to explore potential land for new industrial parks and other employment centers.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, City Engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Establish a spec building at a future industrial park with the aid of the Speculative Building Program.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Alabama Power, Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #4: Foster connections between the business community and local schools to improve career-readiness.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Use the Building (it) Together report to coordinate local workforce development initiatives with regional needs and goals.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Business Alliance, Shelby County Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Promote employment opportunities in growing high-wage industries such as trades, engineering, IT, and medical technology.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Business Alliance, Shelby County Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resume monthly job fairs at the Community Center.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Community Center, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Expand local co-op and apprenticeship opportunities for high school students.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Business Alliance, Shelby County Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Promote Shelby County’s Career Technical Educational Center.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Business Alliance, Shelby County Chamber of Commerce</td>
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## Chapter 5 – Recreation and Green Systems

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City to guide future investments.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, planning consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consider forming a Parks and Recreation Board to run sports leagues and assist existing staff.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, City Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hire additional grounds keepers to maintain public parks and ball fields.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improve drainage at the softball fields.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, City Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Replace aging maintenance equipment.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal #2: Expand recreational opportunities for residents.

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<th>Potential Lead Partner(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Advertise available parks and recreation opportunities to current residents.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consider constructing a dog park.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Explore the feasibility of a walking trail along potentially suitable routes such as Yellowleaf Creek, Little Creek, and/or Old Highway 280.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, Freshwater Land Trust, engineering consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Expand the Community Center to allow space for a second basketball gym.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Community Center, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Consider leasing soccer fields from Shelby County to offer soccer opportunities to Chelsea families.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consider constructing a trail head into Oak Mountain off of County Highway 11.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, Shelby County Facilities and General Services Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chapter 5 – Recreation and Green Systems

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Establish new parks in currently underserved residential areas.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, Shelby County Facilities and General Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Create pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing and future park space.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, City Engineer, Shelby County Highway Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ensure the provision of passive spaces when establishing new parks in Chelsea.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal #3: Restore and sustain water quality, natural habitats and groundwater by incorporating best practices for environmental site design and stormwater management in development.**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on all construction sites to control soil erosion and minimize sediment runoff.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission, Shelby County Environmental Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Incentivize developers to use Low Impact Development (LID) practices or green infrastructure techniques in new developments to mimic natural hydrology where feasible and minimize impacts of stormwater runoff on Creeks and Streams.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission, Shelby County Environmental Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protect sensitive water resources by enforcing the stream buffer provisions of the Design and Construction Specifications.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission, Shelby County Environmental Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pursue opportunities for acquisition, conservations and restoration of open space along year-round streams and rivers and actively protect these resources through land use management, steep slope development regulations, conservation subdivisions, and cluster development.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission, Shelby County Environmental Services Department, Freshwater Land Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 6 – Transportation and Infrastructure

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #1: Build a multimodal transportation network to provide a wide range of transportation choices.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Construct context-sensitive bicycle infrastructure along strategic roadways.</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Highway Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expand sidewalk coverage to connect residents with essential needs and recreational opportunities.</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Highway Department, Mayor and City Council, City Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Explore the feasibility of a walking and bicycling trail along Yellowleaf Creek.</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, Freshwater Land Trust, engineering consultant, Shelby County Highway Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Explore the feasibility of a walking and bicycling trail between the Foothills Point and Chesser Plantation Subdivisions.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council, engineering consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Enforce the City's existing requirement to build sidewalks on all new subdivision streets.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning Commission, City Engineer, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provide bike racks at the recreation center, library, and all city schools.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #2: Create an interconnected transportation network.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enforce existing connectivity and walkability requirements.</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Continue to explore the feasibility of a new connection along Chesser Drive through the Advanced Planning, Programming and Local Engineering (APPLE) Study.</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, engineering consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Establish a minimum connectivity index to increase neighborhood connectivity.</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage the provision of street stubs for future external connections in place of cul-de-sacs.</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Establish maximum block sizes in new developments to foster better connectivity.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Chapter 6 – Transportation and Infrastructure

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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consider adopting a Connectivity Ordinance.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #3: Maintain existing infrastructure in a state of good repair.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Create a proactive street resurfacing program that emphasizes preventative maintenance.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Maintenance Department, City Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop a strategy to regularly review and improve traffic signal timing.</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Highway Department, ALDOT, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #4: Preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop a traffic calming policy to reduce speeding in neighborhoods.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Maintenance Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work with ALDOT to reduce the speed limit on U.S. 280 through Chelsea from 65 mph.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>ALDOT, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identify potential hazard mitigation strategies at dangerous intersections and road locations.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Highway Department, ALDOT, Mayor and City Council, engineering consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Create a park-and-ride lot for commuters to promote transportation demand management (TDM).</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>CommuteSmart, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enforce access management standards to preserve traffic flow and reduce accidents.</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Work with the Shelby County to install a left-turn lane at Chelsea Middle School on County Highway 39.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Highway Department, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Improve connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods to disperse traffic flow.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Annually update a Local Transportation Plan to receive Rebuild Alabama Act funds.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maintain a list of shovel-ready projects eligible for ATRIP-II and Rebuild Alabama Act Grant funds.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
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# Chapter 7 – Public Services

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal #1: Utilize municipal codes to encourage great places.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improve the pedestrian environment and community character by locating parking lots to the rear or sides of commercial buildings.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Engineer, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Streamline the approval process for preferred development patterns.</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tie development incentives to placemaking and pedestrian-friendly design.</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Work with property owners to beautify building facades along highly visible corridors.</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clearly define key gateways into Chelsea through signage landscaping enhancements.</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Parks and Recreation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Set up a Zoning Board of Adjustments to handle special zoning cases.</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Goal #2: Develop strategies and programs to improve code enforcement property maintenance.**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Create a citizen's guide for code enforcement that educates citizens on common code enforcement issues.</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Development Services, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work with faith-based and other non-governmental partners to assist elderly and disabled residents with maintaining their property.</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adopt the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Shelby County Development Services, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hold educational sessions with the City Staff, Planning Commission, City Council and developers to better understand the Highway 280 Corridor Overlay District.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk, Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Continue to promote the “Keep Chelsea Beautiful” campaign to reduce litter.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
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## Chapter 7 – Public Services

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage regular community events such as music festivals, art festivals, and “movies in the park”.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expand the library to provide more space for both children and adult programs.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Public Library, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Establish a long-range annexation plan for the City.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coordinate annexation and development plans with community service and utility providers to ensure adequate provision of services.</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Coordinate and cooperate with neighboring entities and service providers in addressing issues whose impacts extend beyond Chelsea's borders.</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan a fourth fire station to improve response times in the underserved areas of Chelsea.</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Fire and Rescue, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ensure that the Chelsea Fire &amp; Rescue Department coordinates with water service providers in the siting of future stations.</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Fire and Rescue, local water service providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ensure fire department possesses sufficient staff and to respond to emergencies effectively.</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Chelsea Fire and Rescue, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Promote awareness of the Citizens Observer Patrol.</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Citizens Observer Patrol, Shelby County Sherriff’s Office, Mayor and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evaluate development regulations to identify ways that the principals of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be incorporated into the design of newly-developed and redeveloped areas.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Mayor and City Council, Parks and Recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>